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THE
LAST NIGHT OF POMPEII;

A POEM:

AND
LAYS AND LEGENDS.

BY SUMNER LINCOLN FAIRFIELD.

NEW-YORK :

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P R E F A C E.

THE cities of Herculaneum, Pompeii, Retina, and Stabiæ, with many beautiful villages, were destroyed by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, during the first year of the reign of Titus, on the 24th of August, seventy-nine. Buried during more than seventeen hundred years, even their very names were almost forgotten, when the plough of a peasant struck upon the roof of the loftiest and most magnificent mansion in Pompeii; and the excavations of the last fifty years have furnished the tourist, the antiquarian, the novelist, and the poet, with many a subject of picturesque and glowing description. The cities of the dead have not wanted frequent and often faithful historians; every disinterred temple, theatre, statue, pillar, tomb, and painting, has found admirers. It was expedient, therefore, to throw action into a picture at all times impres-

sive, and to delineate without flattery those existing manners, customs, and morals, which, sanctioned as they were, not only by usage, but by legislators and the priesthood, can leave little regret and less astonishment at the terrible overthrow of cities as excessive and not so venial in their crimes as Gomorrah.

The founders of Rome, like the Pelasgi of Greece, were outlawed fugitives from almost every nation—the very seminols of the world. Their earliest laws, discipline, science, and literature, were all created by habitual war. Political ascendancy, acquired by remorseless military skill, was with each the highest good; and hence, though less capricious and somewhat more grateful than the Athenians, there never was a period in Rome, when the people, after long suffering, exacted their rights without incurring the vengeance of the patricians. The aristocracy held the supreme power; in their esteem the commonalty were vassals of the soil. To resist these arrogated privileges, the tribunes instigated factions, and the venerable Forum became the arena of revolt, conspiracy, and blood. The very senators ascended the rostrum spotted with gore. Liberty was defined by philosophers, developed by rhetorical declaimers and adored in the fictions of poesy, but it was never enjoyed.

There were grandeur, vast dominions, empires in bondage, triumphal processions, unrivalled wealth, magnificent prodigality and profligacy, but no just freedom. Roman citizenship was national pride, not individual prerogative. The ignorant cannot govern though they may tyrannize; and ancient sages and priests were too wise to instruct the multitude, though they valued uninitiated sectaries; for communicated knowledge would supersede the lucrative occupations and mysterious powers of their successors.

Cæsar rose upon the ruins of the consulship as that had risen upon the decemvirate. Authority now became personal, concentrated and unappealable, but otherwise there was little change. The senate had long been the mere market of ambition; the people were mercenaries or serfs; the consuls were colluders of some faction, perpetually renewed, or its obedient slaves; and the victorious commander of the legions, long the arbiter of the Roman destinies, on the field of Pharsalia, merely decorated imperial power with a diadem.

Titus was the tenth emperor, and doubtless a just man; but the epithets of exaggerated praise bestowed upon him, sufficiently indicate the character of, at least, seven of his predecessors; and his own brief reign, which was termi-

nated by the poison of his inhuman brother Domitian, demonstrates the morals, humanity, and courage of the age. Therefore, in the picture I have attempted to draw, I have not been intimidated by the victories, arts, literature or mythology of the Romans, but have desired to paint with fidelity the universal licentiousness, which, having infected every heart, left the battlements of the Eternal City ready to fall before the barbarian avenger.

Every province of the vast empire rivalled the imperial capital; and almost every proconsul imitated—sometimes even exceeded—the despotism and debaucheries of Caligula and Helio-gabalus. The union of civil and military power, while it concentrated the energies of government, conferred upon the provincial commander an irresponsible authority, against which it was folly to remonstrate, and madness to rebel. The fathers of Rome were too corrupt to investigate the sources of their revenue or the characters of its gatherers; and too indolent in patrician profligacy to execute any edicts except such as suited their own haughty yet grovelling passions. The fountain being thus contaminated, its thousand streams distributed corruption over the whole empire; and all, who drank its waters, partook the character of them who watched be-

side the wellspring. Few of those who wore the Roman crown, died by the ordinance of nature ; the Prætorians, like the modern Janizaries and Strelitzes, obeyed the decisions of their turbulent prefects ; and what a Sejanus failed to accomplish for himself, a more politic Macro effected for another, through whom he ruled every thing but that imperial folly which ended in assassination. Yet sanguinary as was the ascent, unhappy the possession and quick the downfall of power, the governors of the provinces were less implicated in the royal revolutions than almost any men in Rome. While the Quæstor of the Palatine discovered no defalcation of the revenue, and no rumor of sedition reached the senate, the proconsul remained in his lucrative government during pleasure ; and none of all the Conscript Fathers deemed it expedient to examine the condition of the country over which he swayed his iron rod.

THE LAST NIGHT OF POMPEII.

CANTO I.

Mid mellow folds of softly floating gold,
The flowered pavilions of the spirit winds,
That waved in music to the Ausonian breeze,
And blent, like heart-smiles, with the deep blue vault
Of beautiful Campania, like a God,
(Titan in ancient dreams, whose faintest smile
Elysian splendors breathed through ocean's realm,)
Casting aside earth's throbbing dust, to put
His diadem of deathless glory on,
The sun went slowly down the Appenines.
Far up the living dome of heaven, the clouds,
Pearling the azure, like a seraph's robe,
Wreathed o'er the blessed and beaming face of heaven,
And glanced, mid blush and shadow, o'er the sky,
Full of the gentle spirit of the air,

The mediator of the elements.

As if imbued with virgin thought, the leaves
Tenderly smiled their loveliness, and sighed,
O'er the hushed summer earth, their music, soft
As the sky-hymns o'er wandering souls forgiven.

The hills cast giant shadows, in whose depth
Wild jagged rocks, and solitary floods,

And forests gnarled and hoar, looking deep awe,

Like the vast deserts of a dream, replied

To voices of unresting phantoms, there

Till day-dreams, wrapt in dark sublimities.

On the fair shores and sea-worn promontories,

Where many a Doric palace, proudly built,

And overwhelmed by grandeur, silent stood,

Save when the twilight waters whispered low

Their vigil anthem, childlike slumbered now,

In speechless beauty, the last light ; afar,

The avalanche in the ravine glimmered back

The trembling and most transitory glow ;

The beaked and burnished galleys on the wave

With quivering banners hung, and gay triremes

Passed by each isle and headland like the shade

Of Enna's idol through the realm of Dis.

All nature, in her holy hour of love,

Lifted in rapture the heart's vesper prayer.

And thus from Pompeii's Field of Tombs the voice
Of Vesta's priestess, o'er the sepulchres
Bending beneath the holy Heaven, sent up
The anguish of bereavement, and the doubts
Of an immortal mind that knew not yet
Its immortality, yet seeking e'er
A deathless hope and sighing o'er the pomp
Profane of paynim adoration vain.

THE VESTAL'S HYMN.

Zephyr of twilight ! thine elysian breath
In spirit music steals through orange groves :
Bringst thou no memories from the home of death ?
No whispered yearnings from departed loves ?

Fann'd not thy wing, ere stars above thee glowed,
The pure pale brow that on my birth-hour smiled ?
And bearst thou not from Destiny's abode
One kiss from mother to her vestal child ?

Cold sleep the ashes of the heart that breathed
But for my bliss—when being's suns were few ;
And hath the spirit no high hope bequeathed ?
Or must it drink the grave's eternal dew ?

Hesper ! the beauty of thy virgin light
 Blossoms along the blue of yon sweet sky—
Yet vain my heart soars—from the deep of night
 No voice or vision thrills my ear or eye.

From Vesta's vigil shrine no light ascends
 Beyond this realm of sin, doubt, grief, and death ;
Reveals no heaven where meet immortal friends,
 Shadows no being victor over breath !

Sunlight and fragrance, dewbeam and still eve
 Shed not their bliss and beauty on thine urn !
Has earth no hope time never can bereave ?
 No power again to bid the pale dust burn ?

The rippling rills, the radiant morns, the flowers,
 Bursting in beauty, showers of iris hues,
Starlight and love—the graces and the hours—
 Each—all must vanish like the dial dews !

Budding to wither—lingering to impart
 Life's hopeless pangs when thought shall sink in gloom—
Can song or mythos soothe the shuddering heart ?
 Or e'en the Thunderer's eye illumine the tomb ?

Now from the mountain tent mid ilex woods
Or gay pavilions in the elysian vale,
Wandered, on twilight air, through clustering vines,
The cithern's music and the lute's soft strain
Echoed the soul of love-filled melody.
The hills seemed living with delight, for there
As Summer's burning solstice felt the breath
Of Autumn floating o'er its fires, retired,
From cities thronged with death, the wise and gay,
In fellowship or loneliness, to seek
Felicity or wisdom from the woods;
And there the dreams of Arcady—the thought,
That, in the elder days, inspired the soul
Of Phantasie and breathed through Nature's smiles
Elysian revelations, clothing earth
In mornstar robes of loveliness, became
The blest companions of the pure in heart.

The rose and purple radiance from the sky
Fled like Love's visions or the arrow's plume,
O'er the dim isles and sea of Italy,
Mid the dark foliage mingling like the hopes
Of earth with night-fears, when the shadows, cast
From thought, with high and pure revealments blend
Of beautiful existence far beyond
The mockery and the madness of this life.

In shadowy grandeur lay the glorious sea,
Whose waters wafted spoils from orient realms,
And mirrored Nature's beauty, while dread war
Bathed Punic banners in the gore of Rome.
The evening isles of love and loveliness
Slept in the soothing solitude, wherein
The awful intellect of Rome sought peace
In grey philosophy while faction poured
Its hydra venom, or conspiracy
Walked the thronged Forum, dooming, at a glance,
The loftiest to extinction; here the bard
Unfolded earth's and heaven's mysteries,
Creating the world's creed and Fiction's brow
Wreathing with the immortal buds of truth.
Among the sanctities of groves and streams,
The worn and wearied bosom breathed again
Its birthlight bliss, and wisdom, born of woe,
Uttered its oracles to coming years;
And in the midst of all that thrills and charms,
Weds beauty unto grandeur, earth to heaven,
Here tyrant crime achieved, by nameless deeds,
The world's redemption from remorseless guilt.

Bland airs flew o'er the faded heavens, and streams,
That in the noonday dazzled, and e'en now
Drank the rich hues of eventide, purled on

With lovelier music, and the green still shores
Looked up to the blue mountains with the face—
The cherub face of sinless infancy—
With hope and joy perpetual in that look ;
For, mid all changes, still the faded bloom
Shall be renewed—the slumbering heart revived.
And then the crescent streamed o'er air-winged clouds
With an ethereal lustre, and the stars,
The dread sabaoth of the unbounded air,
From the profound between each downy fold,
Gleamed like the eyes of seraphs, from the realms
Of immortality beholding earth.

Beneath the dying glories of the day,
And the unspeakable beauty of the night,
Yet in the haunt of peril—the dim home
Of dread and danger—looking o'er the domes
Of destined Pompeii—stood two shadowy Forms,
Pale, yet unfaltering—famished, yet in soul,
Fed from the altar of their risen God.
One—a tried warrior by his eye and brow
And dauntless port, leaned on the shattered ledge
Of a Vesuvian cavern, o'er which trailed
The matted and dark vines, and thickly hung
The cypress and dwarfed cedar, fleckering o'er

The twilight of the vestibule with gloom,
And shutting from the inner vault, where slept
The banned and hunted Nazarenes, all beams
Of sunset, mornlight, and meridian, save
Light from the living fount of Deity.
Beside him, folding in Love's holiness
His wasted bosom, on his troubled brow,
Pouring the radiance of her dark eyes, stood
A Hebrew captive, dragged amid the spoils
And splendors of Moriah, when the hour
Of Desolation fell on Zion's towers,
To swell the victor's wild array and add
Another cup of vengeance and despair
To imperial, merciless, world-wasting Rome.
There Mariamne clung to Pansa's breast.
The melancholy loveliness of Love,
That dares the voiceless desert and inspires
The forest solitude, around her hung
Like star-gemmed clouds around an angel's form;
On her pale brow the very soul of faith
Rested as by its shrine; and earth's vain pride
And triumph from the vaulted refuge fled
Where Hope breathed Love's own immortality.
Like her, the sun-clothed vision, in whose crown
Gleamed the twelve orbs of glory as she stood

Amid the floating moon's young shadowy light,
When the red sceptered Dragon cast from heaven
The blossomed beams of the universe, and watched
His spoil in breathless rapture ; so, mid grief
And want and loneliness and danger stood
The daughter of the east, in every woe
Fearless, in every peril quick in thought
And action, whether dread calamity
Waited the wanderings of her wedded love,
Or through the clouds of fear upon her came.
Thoughts, winnowed from the gross and grovelling dust
Of earth, and glistening with the hues of heaven,
Passed o'er their mingled spirits in the depth
Of the hoar Appenines ; (1) and thus the heart
Of the changed Roman spake, whose home had been
The tented battlefield, whose joy, the spoil
Of nations gasping 'neath the banner folds
Of conquest, ere amid the flames and shrieks
Of Solyma, he heard the Voice that fills
Infinity, with immeasurable awe,
And worshipped mid the scorn of pagan bands.
Relentless as the edict he obeyed,
His dauntless soul, in other years, had roamed
Through carnage, and, in triumph, mocked the moans
Of fallen mortality, as his fellows did,

The legions of the loveless ; but the faith,
Whose founder wept o'er doomed and ruthless foes,
Sunk on his bosom as the sunset sinks
Upon the wild and savage mountain peak,
Clothing its barrenness with beauty !—Thus
His saddened but serene mind communed now.
“ Oh, the still, sacred, soothing light that bathes
The blue, world-studded heavens—while the breath
Of Autumn gushes music, and inspires
The purified and thrilled spirit with the power
To cast aside the thrall of flesh and soar
To converse with the seraphim and prayer
And sacrifice beneath the throne of God !
The madness and the misery, that rend
The heart no skill can renovate, come not
Within the bosom's temple that imbibes
The oracles of Truth in every breeze.
Thou needest not thy tephilim (²) to lift
Thy thoughts within the veil, nor seek I more
The prestiges of augurs to impart
The destined future, nor vain amulets
To guard what HE, who gave, can well preserve.
Look, Mariamne ! on the dimpled sea,
That slumbers like the jasper waters seen
In the apocalypse of Patmos, hang
The crowding sails of merchant barks delayed,

The altars at their prows casting pale gleams,
While by the dagon deities of earth,
The terrible apotheoses, wrought
From desolating passions, vainly now
The mariners invoke the gale to bear
Their treasures to the imperial mart—and lo!
The living leaves stir not the gemdew, wept
By twilight o'er the forest, in reply."

Rapt by the charm and majesty—the bloom
And dreamy verdure of the world and skies—
Yet looking far beyond them, thus replied
The High Priest's banished child unto the thought
Of the baptized and scorned Decurion.
"Methinks, my Pansa!—as we gaze around—
The shadows of the hoar and giant woods,
The sea's unearthly and hushed gleam, the eyes
Of the unlimited and soul-peopled heaven,
Thus calm and awful, and the silence, throned
Amid the universe, sink on my soul
With an unwonted dread, and throng my brain
Like breathless ministers of doom. Among
The woven cedar-boughs and oak canopies,
The pale green moss, thick shrubs and mazy vines
Of these dark rocks, a spirit seems to fill

The air with revelations none can hear,
Save they who, fearing God, fear not vain man.
Like the mysterious and unvoiced NAME,
Upon the white gem written, which none beheld
But the anointed, fearful characters
Seem to my startled vision forming now
Among yon dense and thought-winged thunder-clouds,
Whose dusky peaks ascend above the hills ;
And, see ! with what a brow of majesty
Vesuvius, through the bland transparent air,
And vivid moonlight, o'er our vigil bends !
Dwells there not terror in earth's breathlessness ?
And peril in the slumber of the mount ?"

Sadly the Roman turned his gaze below
Upon the fated city, gleaming now
With countless lights o'er pageantries and feasts,
That flared in mockery of the hallowed heaven,
Then answered mournfully his dreading bride.
" The happy deem not so—discern not ought
Beyond their splendor, fame and luxury ;
For, knowing not the evil, which, as clouds
Impart a lovelier glory to the skies,
(Else dim with sultriness) invests all good
With loftier attributes ; they cannot fear

The forfeiture of wealth, or any change
To adverse fortune ; mark the gorgeous pomp,
The maskings, orgies, agonalia now
In mirth and madness echoing o'er our watch
From Pompeii's lava streets ; her sculptured domes
Flash back the torchlights of the riot throng,
And countless chariots, rivalling their God
Of Morn, are hurled along the trembling side
Of this most awful mount, as if the fire
Had never wreathed to heaven and poured the heart
Of earth in blood-red torrents ! By yon gate.
Towers the proud temple of the idol first
Made and adored by earth's first Rebel—him
Called Nimrod, and exalted to a God
By the debased and impious sons of Ham.—
There Parian columns and Mosaic floors
And golden shrines and lavers, and proud forms
Wrought by Praxiteles with godlike skill,
And pictures glowing with unshadowed charms
To tempt, or mythologic pomp to awe
The enthusiast and the sceptic, can attest
Idolatry's magnificence. Within,
The secret stair—the victim, whose wild shrieks
Are oracles—the flamen at his wine
Or darker deeds of sacrilege, while throngs

Of blind adorers, manacled without
By fear's inflicted madness, bend in awe
And pile first fruits and gold around her shrine—
These are the illusions and the destinies
Of Isis and her earthborn vassals, love !
Think they of aspects men believe they rule ?
Think they of perils in their revelry ?
Know they the God whose least respected works
They mock, as deities, by all excess
Loathsome and nameless to the human ear ?”

“ The destined hour of justice and despair,
When they shall gather wisdom, flings its shade
Upon the dial of the conqueror's doom.”
Thought hurried fast through Mariamne's soul.
“ Said not the Christ from the bright Olive Mount,
Looking in sorrow on the temple clothed
With peerless glory, that the Holy Place
Should be defiled—the city trampled—all
Its princely dwellers captive, slain, or strewn
Like sear leaves o'er the unreceiving world,
Or scorned for uttering creeds the torture taught ?
And not one stone upon another left
To mark where once the sanctuary stood ?
Alas ! she sleeps in desolation's arms,

The city of my childhood, and not one
Of all the pleasant haunts, the palmgrove plain
Of Sharon and Siloam's holy fount,
And Lebanon's pavilioned wood—which thought,
At morn or even twilight, sanctified,
Looks from the ruins of my home! but thou,
My Pansa! art my home and temple now,
And the ATONER, whom my people slew,
The GOD of this wrecked heart—wrecked when it felt
Its father slain, its race to bondage sold
Beneath the patriarch's Terebinth! alas!
That bigot faction—pride unquenched by woe—
And thanklessness and treachery and wrath,
Perpetuated by all punishment,
And, more than either, the one awful crime
That ne'er shall be forgiven, till the faith—
They mocked and shall mock, ages hence, the same
Without a country, law, chief, priest and home
They were, in glory, with them all—shall fill
Their dark and desolated minds with light—
That these led on the Roman to the spoil
And allied with his bands to our despair!
—But I do grieve thee, love! by selfish plaint,
And shut my soul to knowledge of the rites
And ministrations of thy monarch race.

Power and impunity with them, as all,
Forestall, I dread, their death-doom ; yet again
As we behold Campania's loveliest realm
Unfolded far beneath us, let me learn
The polity and faith of Italy.
Yon vast pile, in the centre, looking o'er
The Appian with a mild magnificence"—?

“'Twas once, ere Freedom perished, and the car
Of conquest bore the tyrant to his throne,
The thronged and venerated home of Right,
Liberty's temple, where the tribune's voice
Forbade the consul's edict, and none dared,
Without their will, to decimate for war,
Or spoil, in peace, the conscious citizen.
Now, beautified by Parian colonnades,
And jetting fountains and immortal busts
Of Rome's immortal mind, when power, conferred
In peril, was resigned in safety's arms,
Mid the Mosaic corridors and halls,
And priceless trophies of the matchless thought
Of Zeuxis and Apelles, and the forms
Of Phidias, warrior statues, giant steeds,
And consuls stern in look, austere in life,
Dispensing bondage from the Capitol,

Or tributary diadems to earth—
Now o'er this pomp of intellect and might
The serpent spirit of a helot race,
Licking the dust of purple tyranny,
And crushing in its poison folds all thought
That dares be fetterless, and dreads but guilt—
Leaving the slime of ruin, with the hiss
Of shame and desolation, ever glides.
Mark the long pillared ranges to the east—
(A sceptered figure overtops the dome,
Her brazen scales are superfluities—)
In the Ausonian days ere heaven revoked
Its holiest gift to man; ere granite gods,
Sphynxes, cabiri, (³) apes and crocodiles
Became corrupted nature's deities,
There reigned Astraea, bright Aurora's child,
The Titan's seraph—gentle e'en to crime,
Radiant in beauty to the Good; the clouds
Of passion never darkened her sweet brow,
Revenge and hate and venal compact ne'er
Confronted her calm look of sanctity.
Then the Basilicæ were temples meet
For prayer and hymn to the Divinity,
And majesty and wisdom, peace and love
Dwelt with a sad yet just humanity.

Alas, for the brief vision ! and alas
For the world's madness ! giant evil rushed
Through wrecked hearts and crushed spirits and o'erspread
All realms with unmasked vice, impurities
Unnameable, atrocities beyond
The untaught conception of the savage, till,
Casting earth's soil and burden from her wings,
The goddess rose to the elysian throne
She left to meet derision and despair.
Then grovelling men, amid abasements, groped
Through sacrilege and malady and vice,
The agonies of guilt without its shame,
Remorselessness and misery, to their home—
The sepulchre of painted infamies !
Thus felt, though feigning, pagan Rome's best minds :
And since the fated hour when faction raised
The tyrant's beacon banner and the blood
Of Cæsar stained his rival's pillar, none
Have stayed the deluge of unpunished wrong.
The Ambracian waters ⁽¹⁾ were not deeper dyed
Than judgment in yon courts ; there 's not a stone,
That bears not witness, to the soul, of woe,
Injustice, calumny and death ; wrung tears
Have stained the Prætor's seat of perfidy ;
And sighs unsolaced through the long arcades
Echoed like voices of accusing ghosts ;

And hopeless shrieks ascended from the cells
Beneath the proud tribunal, where the will
Of one, that cannot be arraigned, dooms all
To endless anguish or unwitnessed death.
Alas, my Mariamne ! while I gaze
On those most dreaded mansions, burning fears
Thrill my awed bosom, lest this mountain vault,
Dismal and dripping—the dark home of want—
And guiding to the abyss of flame or flood,
Perchance—may fail to shield us from the grasp
Of Diomede's apparitors ! ⁽⁵⁾ forefend,
O Heaven ! the hour of our betrayal ! once
My stricken and stunned soul beheld the death—
Let us within, my love ! my heart misgives
Even at the imagination of the power,
Ferocity and wantonness of him,
Whose sire—(and ne'er had father truer son)
Sejanus taught, Tiberius trusted in,
Caligula exalted ; Nero loved
This subtle, quick Sicilian, and all since
Upon the imperial throne have left in place
Pompeii's Prætor—for his heart feels not !
Honored by these, what have not we to fear ?
His minion's glance is ruin unto both !
My life, his prey, thy beauty—stand not so,

Beyond the shadow of the precipice !
His seekers are abroad—the assassin games
Of yon vast amphitheatre will feast,
Ere long, the merciless idolaters !
Enter the cavern, Mariamne ! hark !
Some lichens fell from the steep rocks o'erhead—
A sandal hath dislodged them—yet no eye
Of mortal may discern us from the crag
That beetles there—again ! I hear the fall
Of guarded steps—so, softly, love ! within !”

Darkness along the rugged crypt—(wherein
The pard had sorted with the serpent, ere
The Roman Convert made his home there, sought
By the fierce demon of the idol faith)—
Floated in wreaths, and round the jutting rocks,
Whence trickled the hill fountains, drop by drop.
Mocking the pulses of each lingering hour,
Hung in its home of centuries ; but now
Gloom e'en more terrible from thunder clouds
Rushed on the tempest's wings o'er every star
Of bright blue ether and the laughing earth,
(Breathed o'er by Zephyr from his vesper throne,
Late, when the oreads danced upon the mount,)
And winds in moaning gusts, like spirits doomed,

Swept through the cavern ; and the giant trees
Through their vast canopies their voices cast
Upon the whirlwind ; and the Appenines
Loomed through the ghastly midnight, shadowing forms
Like earth-gods in the revel of their wrath,
Limitless and robed in vengeance hoarded up
Through ages of quick agony ; and, whirled
In fury o'er the crags, huge boughs and leaves
And dust, leaving the gnarled grotesque roots bare,
Quivered along the sky ; and lightning leapt
O'er cloven yet contending woods, from mass
To mass of all the surging sea of clouds,
That rioted amid the firmament,
Flashing like edicts from the infinite Mind
Of Godhead ; and from sea, shore, cliff and vale
A deep wild groan in shuddering echoes passed
Through the earth's heart, and met the crash and howl
Of momentary thunders in mid air.

In silence from the moss couch of their cell,
Mid the deep arches of the grotto, prayer
Ascended from the pale lips but tried hearts
Of earth's unfriended exiles—heaven's redeemed ;
And there, as o'er their voiceless orisons
The wild tornado's music rushed, the Faith

Sublime, which through all torture and all dread
The Christian martyr in heaven's triumph bore,
Pervaded every thought that soared beyond
The doubt and fear and anguish of their fate.
The first vast masses of dark vapor poured
Their deluge, and the torrents from ravines
And precipices hurried, in wild foam,
To channels bright with verdure and dry beds
Of mountain lakes, flinging their turbid floods
Down the deep boiling chasm and with the sea,
Now hurling its tumultuous waves along
The echoing shores and up the promontories,
Conflicting for the masterdom. Each glen,
Tangled with thorns and shrubs, and each defile,
O'erhung with jagged cliffs, to the dread hymn
Of the night storm, shouted their oracles ;
And from the summit of Vesuvius curled
A pyramid of dusky vapor, tinged
With a strange, smothered and unearthly light.
Portents and prophecies more awful fell
On every vigilant and awed sense than e'er,
From Pythia shrieking on the tripod, sent
Terror and madness to the undoubting heart.
But, while the hollow dirge of the strong blast
Startled the dreaming world, the unruffled minds

Of the disciples with the Paraclete
Communed, and gathered from the cross new power
O'er famine, danger, loneliness and death.

“Thou fear'st not now, my Pansa! though the Mount
Unquenchable beneath us quakes; thy dread
Of human wrath—consorts it with thy trust
In God? thine eye shrinks not when all the heavens
Blaze, and thine ear shuts not when thunders burst,
Shocking the immensity; why fear'st thou man?”

“I know him; knowledge brings to all or hate
Or scorn or apprehension, as his deeds
Or our own nature waken: HE, who died
For crime not his, hath taught my else fierce heart
Humility; derision and revenge
Assail me not, and, therefore, fear invades
My too acquainted spirit when the shade
Of Diomedé along my lone thoughts stalks.
But from his revelations I do know
The MAKER, and his loftiest name is Love,
And that consists not with the sceptic's dread.
Man, gifted with a might above all law,
With every passion by impunity
And rivalry of imperial guilt inflamed,

(And such is this proconsul) must become
A dreaded despot, and the helpless heart,
That weds a persecuted faith and loves
A banished mortal, who on earth to him
Is as elysium, must from peril quail,
And shudder e'en at shadows menacing."

" Yet paynim hate but hurls our thoughts to heaven,"
(Said Mariamne, e'en in woe like hers,
Thinking the thoughts which Miriam from the shores
Of Egypt's sea breathed o'er the tyrant host,)
" Their fountain first and final home, as feigned
Thy poet, of the Titans, thrown to earth
By might supernal, yet unconquering :
They from the bosom of their mother sprung
With renovated strength and added wrath
And hourly towering majesty of mien.
Man may destroy, but cannot desecrate ;
May mock, but never can make vain our faith ;
And if our hopes, like Christ's own kingdom, are
Not of this world, why should we linger on
In this unworthy fear, and shun the crown
Laid up for martyred witnesses of truth ?
Let the worst come in the worst agonies !
We shall not part, my love ! but for an hour ;

Nor shall we leave—the spoil of heathen scorn—
Bright sons and gentle daughters to endure
Inherited affliction, homeless need,
Perpetuated vengeance ; round our hearts,
In the dread trial hour of tortured flesh,
The parent's matchless and undying love,
With all its blest endearments, and the charms
Of budding childhood's rainbow pleasantries,
Gushings of the soul's springtime, falling o'er
Maturer years, like sunbright dew of heaven,
Will never cling and chain our daunted minds
To earth's vain interests. We shall depart
Like sunbows from the cataract, renewed
By luminaries that have no twilight—where
Winter and hoar age, doubt, care, strife and fear,
The desert and the samiel, the realm
Of flowers and pestilence, the purple pomp
And tattered want of human life are not.
What say the Greek and Latin sages, love ?
What Judah's peerless monarch, (⁶) mid the wealth,
The radiance and the perfumes and the power,
The majesty of thrones and diadems,
And the excess of mortal pleasure, said
In his immortal wisdom (how 't was soiled
By passion, in his age, for idol charms,

Heaven knows and sorrows o'er humanity,) Ambition, pride, pomp, pleasure—all Are but the vanities that tempt man on To shame, satiety and death—or worse, Reckless dishonor and shunned solitude, Living with dire remembrances of joy."

"The God, my Mariamne! that for guilt, Incurred in other states or other worlds, Ere the great cycles brought our being here, (As some have deemed, if erring or inspired I know not) clothed our spirits in this robe Of frail flesh, subject to necessities From birth to burial, ne'er debased the mind Unto the body's weakness, yet left not Thought, at all seasons, master of our clay. Wander not oft the wisest? sink not oft The strong? and blench the fearless? and delay To reason with blasphemers the most skilled? And tamper with temptation, the most pure? In the imparted strength of heaven I trust, When the last trial of my faith shall come, That the disciple will not prove apostate. But having thee, my bride! e'en from the mouth Of this wild Cacus vault, that looks beneath

Into the chaos of the mountain gorge,
The air, the forest, the blue glimmering waves,
The meadows with their melodies, the cliffs
Curtained by countless waving vines, or dark
With desolate magnificence, o'erwhelm
My soul with grandeur, love and beauty, till,
Uttering to thee the bliss which nature breathes,
And thrilled by her seraphic eloquence,
I mingle with the tenderness and bloom,
The music, majesty, and loveliness
Of her unfolded scenes, and shrink to meet
The power that rends away these charms--this love
So sternly proved through each uncertain hour
Since from the sanctuary wreathed with flame
I snatched thee, as the JUDGE of that wild night
Did from the dark faith of the Pharisee.
Life pure amid corruption, will to bear
Protracted evil, gratitude for all
The gifts of GOD, and prayer and praise in grief,
May prove a sacrifice to heaven not less
Than all the tortures of the martyrdom.
The tempest passes, and the night wears on ;
The dome of heaven is filled with prophecies !
With voices low, but heard where breathless thoughts
Are oft the most accepted music, let
Our evening hymn ascend, and then to rest."

THE MIDNIGHT PRAYER.

From the wild cavern's still profound,
From cliffs that bend o'er viewless flame,
Our spirits soar beyond the bound
Of being to ~~thy~~ hallowed name.
In gloom and peril, GOD! thou art
Our hope amid the lion's lair,
And from the desolated heart,
Redeemer! hear our midnight prayer!

The lustres of our lives are few,
On darkened earth, our bliss still less,
Yet daybeam fragrance, evelight dew
Hear our heart-hymns in lone distress:
By no green banks, as prayed our sires,
Our thoughts win heaven to Time's despair.
But we are heard by seraph choirs--
Hear thou, O Christ! our midnight prayer!

No magian charms or mystic dreams,
Or Delian voices, uttering doubt,
By fountains dim and shadowy streams,
The fear, the awe of doom breathe out;

By shrines, red bolts have sanctified,
While dragons haunted meteor air,
We worship not as shadows glide—
Redeemer ! hear our midnight prayer !

The breathing earth, the gleaming heaven,
The song of sea, mount, vale, and stream,
While dimness waves o'er holy even,
Blend our glad souls with beauty's beam ;
But darkness, danger, torrents raise
Our hope to THEE, Death-victor ! where
In virgin light fly tearless days--
Redeemer ! hear our midnight prayer !

The bard bereaved from Orcus' gloom,
Through Hades, led his love to light,
And thine adorers from thy tomb
Drink glory in their being's night ;
More blest to need, as thou didst, Lord !
Than be the Phrygian monarch's heir,
Wanting the rapture of thy word—
Redeemer ! hear our midnight prayer !

Judea's incense-hills are dim
And silent, where the song went up ;
Hushed holy harp and temple hymn—
The slayer drinks the spoiler's cup !

Earth o'er the sophist's vision sighs,

O'er deeds, king, priest, and people dare,
And wilt thou not from pitying skies,
Redeemer ! hear our midnight prayer !

Loosed from dark homage unto Fear,

Imaged in lar and teraphim,
And Delphian voice and Ebal seer,
THY bright revealments round us swim,
Pouring upon the path we tread,
Though perill'd, lone, and rough and bare,
Light that inspires the martyred dead !
Redeemer ! hear our midnight prayer !

In sleep and vigil, guard and guide,

In secret quest of earthly food,
From outward foes and inward pride,
And the fiend's wiles in solitude !
O'er idol rites THY radiance pour,
Till, like the myriad worlds of air.
The Universe, as one, adore !
Redeemer ! hear our midnight prayer !

“ What terrible and ghastly blaze flares through
The cavern, filling its abyss with flame ! ”
Said Pansa, startling from the grotto's gloom,
As the last gentle breathings of the song

Whispered along the arches, and with step
Like hunted antelope he sprung to the edge
Of his dark home of banishment. “Behold !
The surges of the tempest fluctuate
In fierce tumultuous masses ’neath yon orb
Of livid fire that from the north careers
O’er the astonished and convulsed firmament !
Nor terror nor surprise is in thy look,
For well thou know’st that awful herald, seen
Through uncreated shadows of events
By HIM who mourned o’er ruin while the pomp
Of thy Jerusalem before HIM glowed.
The comet ! meteor of despair to man !
Like a condemned, demolished world of flame,
With a vast atmosphere of torrent fire,
It traverses immensity with speed
Confounding thought, hurled on by viewless power
Omnipotent and unimagined, robed
In dreadful beauty—heaven’s volcano—home,
Perchance, of those gigantic spirits cast
From holiness to hopelessness for pride.
Lo ! how it sweeps o’er the sky’s ocean ! wreaths
Of purple light along its borders mount
What seem innumerable colonnades

Wrought by the seraphim, most meet to bear
A temple huge as Atlas ; and the hues
Deeper and lovelier than prismatic lights,
Curl o'er the quivering arch as if to roof
The vast mysterious fabric of the sea
Of clouds that throng eternity, to which
Egypt's most mighty pyramid were not
More than a tinted shell to Caucasus.
Are those, that swirl like wrecks amid the surf,
Vast mountains wrenched from their abysses, thrown
From one fire billow's bosom and engulfed
To be again hurled on another's crest ?
Lo ! through the sky, air-rocks, hissing and red,
From the volcanic worlds of heaven descend !
What terrors of infinity they speak !
What revelations of undying power !
What be yon dark and spectral images
That through the bickering fiery waves move slow
Yet haughtily ? oh, what a furnace glare
Rolled o'er the shadows then, and left their forms
Radiant with ruin ! and above, methinks,
Broad wings of diamond brilliance wave and flash.
Gift me thy wisdom, Love ! what said thy sires
Of such revealments of divinity ?"

“Seldom they came and brandished o’er the world
Their flickering and serpent tongues of flame :
Seldom—for generations, centuries passed,
And men saw not the burning heavens o’erwrit
In gory characters of forewarned fate.
Yet deemed our sages, least of dust, that all
The meteors warring with the myriad worlds,
That circle through the abyss of air, had been,
Ere man, time, death, or sin was, stars of bloom,
Casting their beauty and their fragrance on
The zephyr, hymning on their flight through space
The MAKER, and awaiting life to fill
Their groves and valleys with the prayer and song.
Yon shattered mass of boiling minerals
Thus in its whirlwind madness driven on
O’er shocked and startled ether, star-skilled eyes
Of the Captivity’s prophetic eld,—
(When from the Temple in his triumph all
Jehovah’s holy shrines to wanton Jove
Were borne by the proud Flavian victor) saw
Beneath the horizon, ere, in arcs and wreaths
And pillars canopied by thunder folds,
The spiral torrents of volcanic fire
Precipitated through the sphere of earth.
Much in dread visions when between the wings

Of cherubim the Glory rested—much
In banishment and desert solitude—
And more in ruin to the soul of seers
Was given to know ; more than all human thought
By all its systems can impart to man.
Yet with least erring eye the Apostle saw,
What time he felt the martyr's hovering crown.
The cohorts of the conqueror, when we trod—
(A banished nation, from our birth-soil rent,
Helpless and homeless, hurled upon the spear),—
The path of bondage, paused beneath the hill
Of sycamores, when the meridian sun
Flung his fierce arrowy splendors ; and around
The cool o'ershadowed fountains, scowling on
The scorched and agonizing captives, lay
The imperial legions, casting bitter scorn
And ribald merriment on each who passed
Among their stern battalions to assuage
His deadly thirst :—scarce deigned plebeian hate
This solitary solace ;—and they held
Each pilgrim by the beard to bid him bow
In worship to the dread LABARUM, (7) ere,
In terms of mockery, they questioned him
Of the sacked temple's holy spoils—what gold
The chalices, cups, lavers, shrines would bring

To the vast coffers of the Palatine.
With lips unmoistened, weary, sick in soul,
I turned aside into a dreary rift
Of rock o'erbowered with briar and aconite,
To pray and perish, for I had on earth
No friend ! my father, on that morn, had laid
His weary head upon my breaking heart
And died. They bound him to a blighted tree
Upon a desert crag, and, to my shrieks
Shouting, " The traitor may forget the path
The Avenger treads ! let him look on to Rome !"
The savage spoilers dragged me from his corse.
Thus to the earth I cast me, wailing low,
When a hand lifted me, and I beheld
A form, a face, so towering, worn and full
Of blended intellect and sanctity,
Of majesty and mildness, that, methought,
'Twas the Love-Angel ! and his look o'erspread
My soul with joy inscrutable, he held
The very spirit so ; and then his voice
Passed through the mind's depths like a cherub hymn.
" Daughter !" he said, " one doom is sealed in blood !
The Holy City, stained by guilt, defiled
By treason, sacrilege and rapine, sleeps
In dust—and who but God shall bid her wake ?

Yet judgment tarries not, because the arm
Of Rome's proud Desolator worked the will
Of heaven, fulfilling his own ruthless lust.
Thou shalt behold the destiny of them
Who from the furnace of ambition cast
Their brands of ruin o'er the world—for me—
The numbered hours rush on. My daughter! hear!
Thou art the child's child of one great in all
That magnifies the mind and fills the heart
With earth's sublimest influences—all
That clothes our flesh with spotless robes, and claims
Man's loftiest veneration, and heaven's love.
Gamaliel, thy wise ancestor"— My soul
Glowed at the name, and, gazing on that face
Which never blanched with fear though tyrants frowned,
Nor in success exulted, proud of gifts,
Quickly I said, "Who should have talked with him,
Master in Israel, and yet survive
When all, save this wrecked spirit, dream not now?"

"'Tis Saul of Tarsus!" said he, with his eyes
Downcast in pale contrition: "he who first
Bore faggot, brand and crucifix, and watched
O'er the red garments of the martyred saint;
And, when the Temple's vail was rent, and heaven

Shuddered as the pale King of Shadows waved
His sceptre o'er the Son of God,—was held
Aloft, amidst the people, to behold
HIM by our sires blasphemed and slain.—If toil,
Baffled temptation, patient suffering,
Perils by land and wave, and every ill
Mortality hath borne—added to zeal
And many years of vigil thought, may hope
For pardon of my crime, I have not lacked.
But, daughter ! as I rested on my path,
Girdled by foes exulting, I beheld
Thee clinging to thy parted sire, and sought
In secret to unfold, now in thy grief,
The sole Redemption our lost fathers spurned.” ”
She paused as on its wandering orbit now
Rushed madlier the lost star, and, gazing, cried ;
“ —But mark red Ruin's summoner ! beneath
The quivering zenith and the zodiac dimmed
By his storm glories, how the herald scorns
The dominations of the dust, and dares
The loftiest hierarchies of the heaven !
Ghastly with lava light, the molten clouds
In cloven masses swirl before his path,
And with the crash and uproar of the war
Of all the antagonizing elements,
The demon comet cleaves the shuddering air ! ”

“And now the fiend-king of the meteor flings
His glance on the voluptuous wantonness
Of Baiae and Pausylipo, upon
The fairest bosom of earth’s beauty laid
To stain, defile and desecrate! beyond,
The waters of Parthenope, along
The curved and blossomed shores, from the dark brow
Of the Misenum to Surrentum rocks,
And Capreae’s isle of carnage, curl and moan,
Darkened with gory hues; and on the expanse
So beautiful in crystal claritude
On yester morn, the trailing glare hangs now
With tempest gloom contending, yet unmixed.
The promontories and proud Appenines
Seem to uplift their precipices o’er
The wild air and affrighted sea in dread;
And the deep forests, quaking yet beneath
The Alpine torrent blast, through all their clouds
Of leaves, drink the dark crimson streams that pour
In lurid cataracts of flame from heaven:
And every breathing thing—man, beast, tree, flower—
Pants in the siroc that from Lybian sands
Hastens to mingle with the withering breath
Of yon gigantic world of Death!—my frame
Is numbed by torpor, yet the terror holds

My spirit captive to the majesty
Of the unearthly Desolator!—Love!
Thou with the great Apostle didst commune—
O God! I saw him die!—the prophet said?”

“ “Fulfilled, by Christian faith, the Law, whose voice
Was judgment to our fathers, by the blood
Of the One Victim unto all becomes
The very soul of Love!” Thus he began,
And with an angel eloquence, that thrilled
My humbled heart, interpreted the law,
That spake in thunders from the Desert Mount,—
He, the Awakener of nations, whose high gifts,
E’en in the grandest spheres of fame, had won
The palm and laurel crown, but that in vain
Cajoling tempters spread their blandishments
And the seducings of apt sophistries
Tangled their meshes round him. Affluence,
Dominion o’er the treasures and the thoughts
Of traitor worshippers, the feigned awe breathed
By vassal sycophants through tainted courts,
Thronged temples, porticoes, and schools of sects,
He cast aside as winds do dust to dust.
He felt his intellect’s supremacy,
And shrunk from moulded clay that lipped his name

In interested ecstasies—he knew
Himself and sought not other knowledge here.
In place of men's dissembled treacheries,
He, clothed with immortality's own light,
Pictured the Passion, spread the Eucharist,
Bade peril and the equinox obey,
Soothed the quick pangs of lonely malady,
Warded the fold of faith assailed, and stood
In every danger on the vanward tower
To watch, guard, counsel, lead, bear scorn, and die!
Brief was our converse, for the Flavian trump,
In triumph echoes, startled the great host.
But, from that hour, through agony and shame,
I have not trembled to confess the WORD,
Whose smile is, e'en in the worst evil, heaven.
“Farewell! my captive child!” he said, “when power
Purples the rills with Christian sacrifice,
And wanton crime mocks thy unpitied moans,
Forget not Calvary and Gethsemane!
Forget not that my eye beholds e'en now,
Down the dark lapses of Time unconceived,
A terrible atonement of the doom
Knelled o'er the domes of Salem; wildly o'er
Infinitude the vision rushes—earth
With shrieks of wrath and quick convulsions hails

The herald of despair—it whirls and leaps,
Like living madness now, and tosses o'er
Untermingling and unsounded air
Perpetual deluges of flame, to warn
The scoffer and the rioter, who mark
No beam beyond their revel glare! Farewell!
Desolate daughter of a slaughtered sire!
Forget not! and the Paraclete console
Thy lingering sorrows! mine are almost done!"
The fountain of my heart o'erflowed; I looked,
Yet never more beheld the godlike brow
Of Christendom's apostle; through the shades
Of the descending cavern slowly waved
His mantle, the white turban seemed to hang
A moment in the gloom; his sandalled feet
Sent back a few low sounds—and he had passed
Unto his mission and his martyrdom!
But tell me, love! beneath this ghastly light,
The story of his doom (§)—how passed his soul
From torture into triumph when the flesh
Clung round the spirit in its agony?"

"In calm magnificence—in meekness fit
To awe earth's congregated dynasties,
From gloom to glory, through its martyrdom.

It passed—triumphing mid the jeers of men!"
Said Pansa, casting on the o'erhung crags
And piles of rifted scorix half green'd o'er,
(Beauty embracing ruin), mid the intense hush
Of o'erworn nature, glances of quick thought,
As silently he caught faint smothered sounds
Like breaths held back, and then, at intervals,
Gasping in sobs, like night sighs of the surf.
With startled ear, strained eye and quivering brow,
Listened the Christian; but the dells lay still
In their green blessedness, the hills looked down
From their cold solitudes; above, the flame
Of the banned star flared far and dim—beneath,
Lay Pompeii, folded in the sleep that flings
Oblivion o'er the exhaustion of desire;
And, breathing terror from his burdened heart,
He thus portrayed the passion of the Saint.
"No psalteries or cymbals poured their waves
Of music round his death-hour; no grand hymn
Gushed from the tabret, and no gentle voice
Of sorrow from the harp, to wail his doom.
Alone amid his slayers and the foes
Of Him they crucified, Paul calmly stood,
Nor daring pagan hate nor dreading it,
His white hair streaming on the autumnal wind;
His countenance, trenched o'er by thought and care

And toil and suffering, gathered, as he looked
Upon the Prætor on his throne of power,
The grandeur of his youth, the matchless light
Of a triumphant intellect that grasped
An immortality of bliss, and feared
No mortal agony when joy was death.
'Thou art a Christian?' Paul held up the Cross.
'Thou art a Hebrew?' 'Ay, I was, and worse.'
'Thou art a Traitor?' 'Not to God or man!'
Cried the Apostle, and his monarch form
Rose from the ruins of his years, and stood,
Like the unpeered statue of Olympian Jove,
Before the quailing Paynim. 'Edicts, hurled
By Agrippina's son, had Rome a soul,
E'en from blasphemed humanity would call
For vengeance on the utterer. Where 's the guilt
Of thought? the crime of faith, whose very soul
Is low-voiced worship and still charities?
The loftiest mind most loves humility!
The imperial ban ('twas uttered by the banned)
Leaves deeds untouched but criminales the thought;
Hales famished, homeless and (for this vain world)
Hopeless believers of an humble faith,
To judgment, not to trial, and allows
The apostacy, it arraigns as crime.

Death or denial! is the only law
Of Rome, whose wings are o'er the world, to men
So poor, they have no pillow, and so few,
They have no power; and yet the Palatine
Fears they—*they* may subvert its giant might!
Is truth so terrible to the 'immortal gods,'
That they in triumph tremble at a voice?
Dreads the fierce Thunderer the cicada's song?
Or your gay god of Revels, lest the charm
Of his wreathed thyrsus may depart when woods
And caverns are the palaces, and rills
And berries all the banquet of his foes?
Yet none of all thy fabled deities,
Save hirsute fauns and lonely oreads,
Behold our rites, or need shrink to behold.
How should conspiracy consort with want
And weakness so extreme, they lack the power
To lift the dying head or bear the corse
Beyond the grotto where they weep and pray?
And who of all Rome's judges can arraign
The Christian for a deed that could design
Possession of a hamlet? or a hut?
We seek no empire save untrammelled thought;
We court no patron save THE CRUCIFIED;
We win no crown save that of martyrdom.'

‘Smite, silence the blasphemer!’ shrieked the judge,
Robing his fear in wrath; ‘too long we waste
The Empire’s time—chain the conspirator!
And, lictors! guard his cross from slaves, and all
The baser multitudes that throng to hear
The maniac treasons of the Nazarenes.
Hoar breeder of sedition, thou must die!’

‘Nature said that when I was born, and God.
Ere that, a thousand ages, when sin rose
From Hades; not in vain have all the power,
Splendor and guilt of Rome before me passed
In danger yet in solitude, and now
I fold unto my bosom that deep death
I never sought nor feared, and thank the ruth
Of that derision which ordains the Cross.
The master of your vast—of every realm,
Sea, earth and sky hold, taught me by His groan
That the last breath was agony, but He
Hath sent the Paraclete to o’ershadow all
Who perish by his passion, and I go,
Purple idolater! having wandered long
Through many years of weariness, to rest,
Where, couldst thou ever share my bliss, this hour,
With less of anguish, would pass o’er my soul!’

Then led they him unto (°) the Accursed Field
Beyond the Patriot's Precipice, mid bands
Of mailed Prætorians, bearing in the blaze
Of noon Cæsar's Labarum (ne'er unfurled
But in the triumph's tempest ;) in the van
The aruspices in purple trabeæ walked, (1°)
Their oakleaf chaplets waving : then in throngs,
The Luperci, the maddened priests of Mars,
In crimson togas and broad burnished plates
Of brass that mirrored carnage, followed quick.
And the wild flamens of Cybele, stained
By the red vintage, and the countless crowd
Of magi, augurs, senators and slaves,
Paphians and vestals, through the marble streets,
From dusky lanes and sculptured palaces,
Temple and forum and Cimmerian den,
Outpoured in pageantry or squalid want,
Like Scylla's whirlpool floods, to feast on death.
'Twas ever thus in Rome ; she nursed her horde
Of bandits, from the first, on blood, and war,
Wedding with carnage, wrote her very creed
In groans, and wrought her gods from myriad crimes.
So on they led the martyr stooping low
Beneath the felon cross, his glorious brow,
Oft wet with dungeon dew, soiled by the dust

Of the armed cohort, yet his undimmed eye
Flashing its birthlight radiance unto heaven,
Drinking revealments of God's paradise.
Oath, menace, jeer and ribald mockeries,
The vulgar's worship of all greatness, passed
Like the sirocco o'er Campanian flowers
Or snowpiles of the Appenines, gathering bloom
And zephyr coolness, o'er his sainted soul.
His lofty nature did, a moment, seem
Burning in scorn upon his lips, and once,
Clasping the heavy cross as 't were a wand,
He lifted his proud form and matchless head,
And o'er the helmed lictors looked upon
The mockers—and they shrunk beneath his glance
Like grass beneath the samiel; yet no more,
Hushing the spirit of his grandeur, he
Deigned to deem earth his home, or earthly things
Fit wakeners of his thought. And so he came
Unto the Accursed Field, and one, all shunned,
Loathing, drave down the massy cross, whereon,
With lingering patience, he had stretched and nailed,
Through palm and sole, the Martyr, every blow
Tearing the impaled nerves, and through heart and brain
Sending a sick convulsion; but the pangs
Passed quickly o'er his features, though the limbs

Quivered, and, as he looked to heaven, a light,
Brighter than universes of bright suns,
Fell round the Martyr in his agony!
‘ A Prodigy! Jove flashes wrath! the gods
Forbid the death!’ shouted the multitude,
Like foliage fluctuating, as the spells
Of all-believing Fear fell on their hearts.
‘ All Rome shall perish if the Christian dies!’

‘ Hence, vassals! fools! home to your huts! away!’
Rose the proud Prefect’s quick, stern, ruthless voice,
Whose echo was an oracle. ‘ Ye slaves!
The beast should batten on the slain, I know,
And ye can taunt and torture helplessness,
And dread the very shade of danger’s ghost;
But, by the Spectre River! Rome’s best spears
Shall search your dastard dust, if ye but speak
Ere each adores his hearth-god! hence! away!’
The Gracchi from the Aventine dragged forth⁽¹¹⁾
For senators to slaughter well displayed
The liberties of Rome; and they, who held
The Briton chief barbarian, shrunk away,
When a patrician bade, without a voice!
But bondage and brute violence are one.
Then, as the steps of the vast throng retired

Like dying waves, the priests and guards outspread
Their banquet on the plain beneath the tents—
(The kalends of the seventh month had come)
They bore to shield the sun, while there they watched
The fever, famine, thirst and pangs of death.
Pheasants, Falernian, mirth, song, jest and oath
Inspired the revel 'neath the cross, and all
Care and command, save that which bade them see
The Martyr die, fled from their spirits now.
Wanton with wine, the priest revealed to scorn
His wiles and sophistries and oracles,
Blessing the phantom gods that shadows held
Dominion o'er the conscious fears of men.
Warriors portrayed, in tales of other climes,
Numidia, Arcady or Syrian realms,
The splendor of the spoil, the gems and gold,
The perfumes, luxuries and regal robes,
Fair slaves and diamonds, wafted from the shores
Of the Orient, in homage to the diadem
That circled nations. Many a demon deed
And dark career of crime then first to light
Leapt from the dizzy brain of guilt, and moved
Applause and rival histories of acts
O'erpast; how dusky kings in palaces,
Amid their pomp, gleaming magnificence,

Did perish in the flame, and none could save
The victim, though they bore his coffers forth
How queens and virgin princes in their bowers,
On brodered couches slumbering, while their robes,
Like zodiacs, glittered in the purple light.
Felt not the serpent that trailed o'er their sleep.
But died in their pavilions, voicelessly !
Then senators and knights, with mutual mirth.
Discoursed of laws enacted or suppressed
As suited Cæsar, and quenched liberties,
Naming them treason ; and asserted rights,
They branded as seditions ; and revealed
To the unshuddering guards the mysteries
Of Rome's proud Forum, where the agonies
Of desolated kingdoms, and the shrieks
Of nations in their bondage, and the tears
Of eloquent affection to the lords
Of power were music and unholy mirth.
'Then round the martyr mingled voices rose
Louder, and laughter to impiety
Replied, and men, the gods, truth, chastity.
Love, honor, courage and fidelity,
All were but mockeries to the rioters.
" Herce ! is this the Lupercal ? ye howl
Like Conscript Fathers when the spoil is lost !

Peace!" said the Prefect—"see ye not the lips
Of yon hoar traitor trembling with quick thought?
Listen! he speaks his last,—his heart 's too old
To linger in the torture of the tree!"

"The isles shall wait, Jehovah! for thy law, (1)
And knowledge to and fro shall spread, till earth
Utter Thy praise like voices of the sea!"
Thus spake the victim, in delirium,
Wrought by deep anguish, wandering yet among
The dear homes of his mission. "Dangers wave
Their wings around us, brethren! and the waste.
Boundless and shadowless, must still be trod!
Yet not by dim lights of a doubting faith
Are ye led on through wrong and woe and want.
For the Anointed hath not left us here
Without a Comforter, and hath He not
Laid up, in many mansions, crowns of joy.
Where mortal doth put on immortality?
Grieve not the Spirit! yet a little while,
And ye shall reap the harvest and rejoice;
And though, ere then, this flesh must see decay.
Yet I shall mingle with your prayer and hymn,
By morn and eve—and breathe the Savior's smile
O'er the glad isles of Gentiles so beloved!"

Then spasms of vivid pain passed o'er his face,
His eyes rolled back upon the brain, and left
The pale streaked orbs writhing in gloom—the lids
Now folded to their lashes, coiling now
In nature's deep convulsion, till the veins,
O'erfraught and purple, on his cloven brow,
Seemed bursting o'er the altar of his soul.
His livid lips, parted by torture, breathed
Deep undistinguished murmurs, then compressed
Like sculptured curves and lines of thought; the limbs,
Meantime, grew cold, and the dark gathering blood
Forsook its own familiar temple, when
The shadows of the sepulchre stole on.
“Dis leaves his realm to welcome him,” said one.
“Peace! thou discourteous knight! jeers skill not now;
Thy mirth is motlied with mortality,
And thou thyself mayst pray for Lethe ere
The graceless Stygian grasps thine obolus.
Put on thy knighthood! peace! he speaks again!”
And the proud Prefect flung his casque to earth.

In moans, like autumn gusts, the martyr spake,
Hovering o'er shattered memories like the sun
O'er broken billows of the shoreless sea!
“Let me behold thy domes, Damascus! meet

It is the arrows of Life's penitence
Should pierce the persecutor.—Oh, farewell!
My brother! blessed in Pisidia be
Thy walk and watching!—To the Unknown God!
Are ye the worshipped wisdom of all Greece,
When ye disdain your thrice ten thousand gods,
Adoring Doubt or Demon, knowing not
The Deity revealed?—Ye can attest.
I have not coveted the gold of earth,
The gorgeous raiment or vain pomp of men,
But ministered, in all, unto myself!
Ay, driven to and fro in Adria
Upon Euroclydon, no hope is left
But in the Wielder of the wave and wind.
Despair not! though sun, moon and stars are hid,
Jehovah watches from eternity!
Contend not, brethren! untaught man may win
Redemption from the deep crimes of his age,
And be a law unto himself; e'en Rome
Hath in her years of darkest guilt had such.
Oh, sorrow not like them who have no hope!
The seed shall not decay though I am dust!
--Why do ye scourge me, soldiers? know ye not
I am a Roman? I appeal to Cæsar!
--Bring me a winter robe when thou dost come

Again--the night is cold among the hills.
And I am very weary! so, farewell!"

Then the bare nerves and sinews sent their pangs
For the last time upon his fainting heart,
And, as beyond the trembling battlements
Of agonizing flesh, the spirit strove
To flee, beholding heaven, the bitter strife
O'erawed the infidel, and round the cross
Stood silent pagan revellers! Once more
The apostle's peerless mind gleamed out--his eyes,
Living in the dark light of boyhood, flung
Their dying splendors o'er the Imperial Hills,
The mountains and the waters--while his pulse
Intensely throbbed and paused--and the heart's chill
And fever rushed to life's deep fount and spread
A shuddering faintness and sick gasping sense
Of falling through infinitude, o'er all
The vital functions of his frame. "My God!"
'Twas but a hollow echo from the tomb,
Yet it said "Jesus! let me--see--Thy face!"
And Saul of Tarsus stood before his God!"

"As thou shalt stand before Gaetulia's king,
'The Barcan lion!' cried the ruthless voice
Of Diomedes' outwatching messenger.

The undeterred achiever of his will—
Grasping the Christian while his fellows rushed
Upon his pale but dreadless Hebrew bride.
“Well!” said the minion, “traitors serve, sometimes.
The empire’s weal, and martyrdom, methinks,
Hath a rare syren music, for ye stood
Grandly before us in the comet light,
Wrapt in your exalted Nazarene,
Till we could climb the cliffs and do the hest
Of the proconsul, unfulfilled too long!
Come, Rabbi! thou art skilled in subterfuge,
And hast not scorned the sword in better times—
The games shall test thy genius—on with me!
The Gladiator’s banquet waits, and thou
Shalt quaff the massic or the tears of Christ. (¹³)
Veles! thou hast thy charge! the *ſrætor*’s coin
Rewards not slack obedience, though his wrath
Ne’er palters with a thought of treachery!
The lady—Venus! but she hath a brow
Like the coy Delian queen!—must be disposed,
With all respect,—lead on! the daystar wanes!”

“Thraso! we were not foes when, side by side,
We scaled Antonia’s tower, and saw the walls
Of Zion crushed—Why now? thou art disguised,”

Said Pansa, with the heart's best eloquence,
As down the steep crags turned the licitor band,
Bearing his bride. "Why from my heart, by guile
Betrayed, by violence asunder rent,
Tearst thou my Mariamne, mocking thus?"

"And dost thou ask, apostate? hast thou not
Contemned the gods, scorning thy father's faith?
Forsaken the eagle banners, deeming rocks
Better than camps? and sowed sedition, thick
As sand-clouds, through the legions? thou hast wed
A captive, too, whom, though with all thy gold
Thou bought'st, poor fool! yet hast not held, as bids
The law, in bondage! dost thou ask again?
Mine office deigns no farther word, but more
Thou soon shalt learn in bitterness! lead on!"

"Bear me with her, where'er ye drag, whate'er
Ye or your lords in lawlessness inflict!
No more my voice shall crave or ye deny!"

"The Prætor's edict suits no purposes
Apostates may desire; your destinies
Have separate mansions, renegade!" Along
Ravine and precipice and lava bed,

Vineyard, pomegranate grove and vale of bloom.
The Pagan haled his victims, till the gate
Of Pompeii flew wide, and Pansa saw,
In speechless agony, a moment ere
The Mamertine abysses (¹⁴) were his home,
Pale shuddering Mariamne through the gloom
Of statues, pillars, temples and hushed streets,
Where fountains only witnessed deeds of death,
Borne like a shadow to a nameless doom.

END OF CANTO I.

THE LAST NIGHT OF POMPEII.

CANTO II.

VANDAL and violater, Time! thou art
The spirit's master—the heart's mocker! thou
Pourest the deluge of returnless years
Over the gasping bosom, and on thought,
That, in aurora streams of magic light,
Flung its deep glory o'er the heavens, dost heap
Clouds without flame or voice, cold, deep and dark,
Which are the shroud of the mind's sepulchre!
Far better not to be than thus to be!
Better to wander like the gossamer,
The baffled buffet of each aimless wind,
Than sink like dial shadows, all but breath
Leaving the wreck that trembles on the strand.
And why to man, feeble in youth's best hours
Of intellect and power, in all his hopes

So false unto himself and his compeers,
Are strength and pride and potency assigned?
Why is his grandeur wedded to despair?
His love to grief? his heart to hopelessness?
His fame and his dominion to the dust?

Yet thou, Tyrant of Air! hast chronicles
Of darker import, and the world is filled
With thine un pitying ministers of woe.
Beneath the rush of thy dark pinions nought
Lives, or life lingers, breathing at its birth
The death that soon becomes an ecstasy.
Wan yet not hoary, broken at the goal
Of young ambition, myriads feel thy flight
In torture and desire in vain to sleep.
Earth's beauty, heaven's magnificence, the charms
Of zephyrs, verdure, azure, light, hills, streams.
And forests, castelled by eternal rocks,
Beheld long, fade upon the sated soul,
Exhaust by their sublimities, and shed
Their fragrance, music and romance on hearts
Inured and soiled—too weak to bear their bliss,
Too cold to feel their glories! And we roam
The paradise of all earth's pleasantries,
Amid the care, toil, phrenzy, want and strife

Of the protracted agonies of breath,
Feeding on raptures, that, fulfilled, are woes !
But o'er thy ruins, Time ! and the thick clouds
Of the heart's mysteries a sun shall burst,
As now Apollo's steeds, caparisoned
In mornbeam hues, rush up the Appenines,
Star-eyed Eous and wild Phlegon first,
Pouring the sungod's splendors o'er the domes
Of Pompeii waking from her last still sleep.

As from the violet pavilions stole
The dayspring's beautiful and blessed light,
Like rose-leaves floating, and the mountains bent
Their awful brows in worship at the fount
Of radiance, by all ages sacred held
As the peculiar home of deity,
Mythra or Bel or Elios—the name
Erred, but the spirit brooded o'er the heavens,
Up rose the vassals from their earth-beds, late
On yesternight pressed by the sinking limbs
And breaking hearts of bondage ; no perfumes
Needed the stripe-gashed body or shorn head :
No lavers waited thralldom ; on they flung
Rude garments soiled by servitude, and turned
To grind at the accursed mill, and lift

Their branded brows at the stern master's voice,
In silence passing o'er Mosaic floors
To bear the golden bowl or myrrhine cup,
Falernian or frankincense to their lords.
For them no statue bowed in majesty,
No consul framed a law, and none of all
The common deeds of earth had interest,
For they were stricken from the roll of men
And banished from humanity, (¹⁵) and Rome
Gazed from the temple of her trophies on
The hopeless captives—from her triumph hills,
Where armies shouted Liberty! upon
Her myriads of bondmen, with a smile,
That thanked her thrice ten thousand deities,
The o'ershadowing empire of the world was Free!
Waking to want from dreams of affluence,
Parting from splendor to meet toil and tears,
Then rose pale Indigence in shattered cells,
Dusky and damp and squalid, yet o'ertaxed
By the imperial rescript, to endure
The taunts of mimes, the old indignities
Of freedmen, merciless in novel power,
The insolence of taskers and the shame
Of slack dismissal with their pittance, when
The proud patrician deigned to bid his slave

Cast the base drachms at the plebeian's feet!
Ere melted the wreathed mists from isle or mount,
City or lake, while Pompeii's pinnacles
Ascended in uncertain grandeur yet,
The artizan went forth to build again
The fabrics earthquakes had late sported with;
Doomed, ere the dial rested shadowless,
To cease from toil for ever!—and the sounds
Of early servile labor multiplied
Through glimmering arcades and noisome courts
Thronged ever by the peasants pomp creates,
As the sun gathered up his streaming rays,
And his broad disk lanced light o'er all the earth.

Late, from their holy dreams in the profound
Of their proud temples, ne'er by foot profane
Invaded, waked the pagan oracles,
The ministers of mysteries all unrevealed,
Save to the forgers of the fictions,—gazed
Bewildered on the amphoræ that stood
Beneath their sacred stores (¹⁶)—and turned, once more,
To matin visions of deluding faith,
Processions and responses, gorgeous robes.
Banquets, and free bequests when they alone
Stood o'er the dying, and dominion bought

By endless cycles of hypocrisies.
All hierarchies, howsoe'er unlike
In ritual, are in earthly hope the same ;
Pleasure, their idol, ease, their ecstacy,
Power, their ambition, and the will of God,
The blasphemed agency of their own lusts.

The virgin dew yet on the verdure hung,
When, one by one, the mourners of the lost
Stole to the street of sepulchres and sat
Beside the ashes of their ancestors,
Watching the beams that never more would greet
The perished, and, they thought not, never more
Light Pompeii to her loved festivities !
Few, on this mission of elysian love,
Left Tyrian couches and the bliss of sense ;
Yet *they* were blessed in the seraphic gift
Of feeling, which, in solitude, is heaven !
Tombs were the earliest temples, the first prayers
Gushings of grief, the holiest offerings,
Tears of bereavement, and the loveliest hymns,
Sighs over the departed ; worship, then,
Rose from the heart, that, mid these simple rites,
Felt no delusion or vain mystery :
Urns were the altars, and the incense, love.

The sodden pulse, offered by humble faith.
Desiring not demanding, far outweighed
Oblations chosen from barbaric spoils ;
And with a purer purpose, poverty
Knelt by the wayside image of the god
Than gorgeous pontiffs by Olympian shrines

When sin gains sanction and the heart is soiled
By unrebuked, ay, customary crime,
The tenderest yearnings of the bosom—love,
With its dependence and delight—its smile,
Like rifted rose-leaves, and its tear, like dew
Shook from the pinions of the seraphim,
Breathe unaccepted music ; the caress
Of childhood hath no bliss—its early words
And looks of marvel find no fellowship—
For the evil usages of life, that dwells
But in the glare and heat of midnight pomp,
Corrode, anneal and desecrate all love.
Yet some preserve the vivid thoughts—the charms
Of household sanctities ; and one such now
Rose from affection's spotless couch and bent
O'er the angel face of virgin infancy ;
And thus her gentle and blest thoughts found words.
“ Thou sleep'st in Love's own heaven, my child ! that brow

No guilt hath darkened and no sorrow trenched :
Those lips, which from thy fragrant breath receive
The incense hues of thy sweet heart, no gust
Of uttered passion hath defiled ; thy cheek
Glowes with elysian health and holiness :
And all thy little frame seems thrilling now
In the pure visions of a soul sky born.
The Lares be around thee, oh, my child !
For never yearned Cybele over Jove
With transport deeper than is mine o'er thee !"
Then o'er her babe she spread the drapery,
Kissing the shut lids and unsullied brow,
Where the mind dreamed, perchance, of bliss foregone,
And shading with her byssus robe and flowers
The sunbeams from the sleeper, with a step
Soft as the antelope's, she stole and knelt
In prayer for that loved one at Vesta's shrine.

Breathing their bliss in melodies of love,
Their pictured wings fanning the ether, flew
The song birds, and the groves were full of mirth
Too pure for any voice but music's, when,
Lifting their dim eyes to the blaze of day,
Campania's proud patricians deemed the hour
So far removed from common time of rest.

Without dishonor, they might breathe the breeze,
That o'er the dimpled waters and the flowers,
Since the first tints of dawn, had played like thought
Over the face of childhood—yet bore now
The vivid heat and dense effluviæ
Of culminating sun and marsh exhaled.
To mask the treacheries of eye and lip
Is pride's philosophy, the felon's skill,
The code of kings, the priesthood's mystic creed,
Unknown to accolytes; and none beheld,
Save the bronze lares, revel's quivering eye,
And dull brow bound with iron, or the face
Of matron guilt pallid with watch and waste,
And trembling in the faintness of a heart
Wrecked by excess of passion, yet again
Gasping for midnight poison! Untrimmed lamps,
Sculptured with shapes of ribaldry to lure (17)
Even satiety to sin's embrace,
To tempt the timid and inflame the inured,
Stood round the household altar, and upon
The silken couch of customary crime
Shed the pale, sickly light of vice o'erworn.
Oh that lascivious guilt at midnight wore
The lurid look, the loathing shame of morn!
Bracelets of gems, enchanted amulets.

And vases wrought with wanton images,
And frescoes, picturing the satyr joys
Of Jove and Hermes and the Laurel God,
(For the old divinities were human crimes)
And fountains, with nude naiads twining round
The unveiled tritons, and fair pedestals,
With groups of Paphians, in the forest dim,
(Where gloating forms lifted the filmy robes
Of the bacchantes in voluptuous sleep,)
Holding their revelries with gods disguised,
And every portraiture of pleasure known
To them, whose whole religion was excess,—
All in the chaos of the morning, flung
Alluring raptures over sated sense
And sickened passion, uttering, without voice,
“Ye buy Repentance at the price of hell!”

Loathing the fiend they folded to their hearts,
The madness and the malady of life,
The languor and the listlessness, that spring
From the exhaustion of a maniac lust,
The masters of the throng, in marble baths
And Araby's perfumes and cordial cups
Sought renovation for renewed delights.
Odors and thermal waters may restore

The maddening fever of the flesh, but earth
Hath nought to hush the muttering lips of guilt,
Or quell Death's agonies which guilt inflicts.
The Sybarite from Salmacis arose (¹⁸)
To consummate his orgies with fresh bliss,
But Lethe had no power o'er memories
Of broken vows and imprecating oaths
Made by the River of the Dead, what time
Cocytus moaned and Phlegethon upcast
Its lurid gleams o'er chasms of torrent gloom,
Bidding the banished reveller, who dared
To mock the Styx, roam by its blackened shores
Through the dark endlessness of shame and woe!

It was the Harvest Festival; the corn
Of Ceres filled the garners, and the vine
Of the Mirth-Maker from the winepress poured
Divine Falernian; and the autumnal feast,
The gathering of the fruits, to all the gods,
(Through the Earth-Mother and the King of Cups)
Was dedicated with a soul of joy.
In every temple the proud priesthood put
Their purple vestures and tiaras on
For the solemnities they loved to hold,
And masked the haughtiness of peerless power

Beneath an austere aspect and a faith
That spared no violater of their laws.
Forth with the swell of trumpet and the voice
Of mellow flute and cithern, came the pomp
In all its grandest pageantry; the god
Of light gleaming on banners wrought with forms
Picturing theogenies or bridal rites,
Or earthly deeds of the divinities.
First walked Jove's pontiff in his diadem, •
His crowned and sceptred standard fleckered o'er
With lightning bolts and tempest gloom, upborne
By popæ, weaponed for the sacrifice.
Then in the mazes of a wanton dance,
Lifting the thyrsus crowned with ivy wreaths,
And muttering banquet hymns, the priests of mirth
With antic faces and wild steps leapt on.
Next, with a golden ensign, vales and hills
Along its borders, filled with flocks and herds,
And tall sheaves in the centre, slowly trod
The ministers of Saturn's Daughter blest.
But, dimming all by splendor only known
In Egypt's voiceless mysteries, above
The long array now towered the gonfalon
Of Isis, glowing with devices shame
Shrunk to behold, the shapes of earth's worst sins—(19)

Deified fiends ! and with the lozel's smiles,
Her crowned pastophori, proud of their shame,
Waved round the ribald picture as they passed
The mansions of their votaries, and maids
And matrons hailed it from their porticoes.
Apollo from his eyes of ecstasy
And lips of bloom filling the bosomed air
With oracles ; and Hermes, in the embrace
Of Iris, winging the blue heavens of love,
With his enchanted rod pointing to earth ;
Vesta mid her Penates welcoming ;
The heavenly Venus, with her starlight eyes,
Veiled brow and girded cestus, looking up
To the pure azure, spotless as her soul,
Followed by the more worshipped Cyprian queen,
So shadowed by her draperies that guilt
Revelled in beauty mocked with robes to tempt ;
The war-god with the ancilia and the plumes (²⁰)
Of gory fight, whose triumph was despair ;
Proud Pallas with stern lips, and stainless brow,
Surmounted by its olive wreath, and eyes
That never quailed in their calm chastity ;
Cotytto—the earth-passion's idol—mid
The unclothed Baptæ painted with designs
To startle e'en sear'd sense into a blush ;

The sea-king with his trident ; the castout
And shapeless forger of the lightning bolts ;
The deity of Erebus with her
He bore from Enna, and his son, the god
Of gold ; Diana, in her treble forms,
Magician, huntress, virgin of the skies ;
Hirsute and pranksy Pan, amid his fauns ;
Nymphs, dryads, oreads and tritons ;—all
The beautiful or dread or uncouth thoughts.
The imagination made divinities,
In gorgeous chaos, to the Pantheon
Through Pompeii's streets thronged in their riot hour.

Behind the glittering crowd, the hecatomb
Of victims, led by golden cords, moved on.
To every god the sacrifice was meet ;
The dove to Venus, and the bull to Mars ;
To Dian, the proud stag—the lawless goat,
That tears the vine-leaves, to the deity
Of the gay banquet ; and their horns, o'erlaid
With gold, tossed haughtily amid the crowd.
As, rolling their undreading eyeballs round,
They glared defiance and amazement, mute
Yet merciless when fit occasion came.
“ An evil omen ! lo ! the victims strive.

And we must drag them to the altar !" (²¹) said
The trembling augur—"what most dismal grief
And fatal destiny shall follow this ?"
Yet onward surged the multitudes with boughs
Of olive in their hands and laurel crowns,
And Zeian barley spears folded in wreaths
By locks from richest fleeces, as they passed
The temple images, with practised skill,
Bending their foreheads on expanded palms.
And onward o'er the Appian Way the host
Of mitred, robed and bannered priests drew nigh
The fane of all the gods, and, at a word,
The music softened to a solemn strain,
The measured voices of the holy chiefs
Ascended in a song, and, as they ceased,
The people, like the ocean's myriad waves,
Raised their responses to the harvest prayer.

THE PÆAN OF THE PANTHEON.

STROPHE.

Wielder of Worlds that round Elysium dance
Beneath the brightness of thy sleepless eye,
Who from the bosom of the flame dost glance,
And feelst our time in thine Eternity !

Thou deathless Jove !
Monarch of awe and Love !
Look from the radiant height of thy dominion 82
On thine adorers now,
And waft thy smile on Hermes' rainbow pinion,
And bend thine awful brow !
Immortal and supreme !
With vows and victims to thy shrine we come,
And hearts that breathe the incense of their praise,
And first fruits borne from each protected home,
To bless thee for the blessings of our days !
Have we not heard thy spirit in the dreams,
That glance o'er thought like morn's young light on streams ?
In visions, watched thy bird of triumph near
The azure realms of thine ethereal sphere.
Waiting behests of victories and powers
And counsels from thy throne ?
Hath not thy thunder voice, the summer showers,
The lightning spirit all thine own,
Bade strew the exulting earth with fruits and flowers ?
Therefore, we render up
The spotless victim from the wood
And household field, and from libation cup
Pour the rich vine's unmingled blood.

Accept our praise and prayer,
Sceptred Immortal of the chainless Air !

Chorus.—King of Elysium ! hear, oh hear
From thine Olympian seat !
To priest and people bow thy sovereign ear !
We dare not see thy face, but kiss thy sacred feet !

ANTISTROPHE.

God of the mornlight, when the orient glows
With thy triumphant smile, and ether feels
The Hours and Seasons, mid their clouds of rose,
Swept o'er its bosom on the living wheels
Of thy proud car,
When through the abysses of the heaven each star
Before the splendor of thy spirit fades
Like insect glimmerings in the noontide glades !
Hail, radiant Phœbus ! lord
Of love and life, of wisdom, music, mirth,
At whose resistless word
Being and bliss dance o'er the blossomed earth !
O Pythian Victor, hear !
Pæonian healer of our ills, behold !
Breather of oracles ! thy sons draw near
To feel the music of thy lyre unfold,
As shadows change before the morn to gold,

The sealed-up volume of our darkened minds.

Breathe on Favonian winds,

And from the effluence of immortal light

Strew our dim thoughts with rays,

Till, sorrowing o'er this failing praise,

We know, with burning hearts, to sing thy deeds aright !

God of the harp and bow,

Whose thoughts are sunbeam arrows, hear !

Giver of flowers ! dissolver of the snow !

Accept our gifts and let thy sons draw near !

Chorus.—Io Pæan ! from thy sphere,

King of prophets, hear, oh hear !

From hallowed fount and hoary hill,

And haunt of song and sunlight near,

With inspirations come and every bosom fill !

E P O D E.

Reveal the shrine ! wave ye the laurel boughs,

Dipped in the fount that purifies the heart !

Unsullied Dian ! breathe our holiest vows !

Storm-crowned Poseidon ! to the imperial mart

Thou bearest the Median gems,

And loftiest Asian diadems,

And o'er thy billowy world we pour our praise !

Uranian Venus ! let the Vesper rays

Of thy beatitude around us float and dwell,
Till thine ethereal loveliness o'ercomes
The stains and shadows of thy mocker here,
And high the vine-god's song may swell
Among the shrines of Vesta's hallowed home
Without a following tear ;
And Isis' mystic rites may thrill
The soul with Plato's most celestial vision.
And Pallas in her grandeur fill
The heart of Ceres with her mind elysian !
Blessed with bounty, hail !
What but thy gifts can mortals offer thee ?
Smile on the banquet and the song and tale
The Dionysius breathes to thy divinity !
Hail, all ye gods of air, earth, wave and wind !
Ye oceans from the streams of human mind !
With spotless garments and unsandalled feet,
Purified bodies and undaring souls,
We the Pantheon tread ! oh, meet,
Meet your adorers ! lo ! the incense rolls
Along Corinthian columns and wrought roof,
Like Manes wandering o'er the fields of bliss !
Chill not our worship with a stern reproof !
Hail, all ye gods ! we worship with a kiss !

Chorus —From shore and sea and vale and mountain,
Hail ye divinities of weal or woe !
Olympus, Ida, grotto, fountain,—
We in your Pantheon kneel—around your altars bow !

Thro' the bronze gates, sculptured with legends feigned
Of the theocrasies, the pageant swept,
A thousand feet dancing the song, and paused
Around the shrines they dragged the victims up.
Then bending from Jove's altar to the east,
The Pontiff raised the golden chalice, crowned
With wine unmingled, and, amid the shower (²²)
Of green herbs, myrrh, obelia and vine leaves
Poured out the brimmed libation on the head
Of the awaiting sacrifice, from flocks
Chosen for beauty, and young quickening life.
Then with a laurel branch, he sprinkled all,
Circling the altar thrice ; the heralds, then,
Cried, " Who is here !" and all the multitudes
Like billows answered deep, " Many and good !"
" Breathe not the words of omen !" " Lo ! we stand
Like Harpocrates in the vestibule !"
The High Priest, mid the wreathing incense, raised
The prayer ; the augur, with his wand, marked out

The heavens ; the aruspices, with eyes of awe
Behind the slayers of the sacrifice
Stood gazing on the victims. " Hath no spot,
No arrow from the Huntress' bow or dart
Of Pythius stained the offering ?" said the priest.
" 'Tis fair and perfect, and unblemished stands
To give its body to the Harvest Queen
And all the gods !—We pour into its ear
The holy water—yet it doth not nod !
We bend the neck—it struggles for the flight !
Dismal presages ! omens of despair !"
The Pontiff quailed, not in the dread of gods,
(His sole divinity was his own power)
But fear of superstition's evil thought,
As from the fluctuating host arose
A smothered shriek of terror ; and, in tones
Quick, stern, and deep as the exploded bolt,
Commanded " Strike ! the wrath of Jove attends
The impious delay !" and, hushed as heaven
When broods the hurricane on cloudy deeps,
The worshippers stood trembling as they looked,—
The agonies and ecstasies of fear
And hope, in stormlike glimpses, shadowing o'er
The broken waves of faces—on the shrine,
And saw the axe of the cultrarius fall !

Maddened and bleeding, yet not slain, the ram
Flung back his twisted horns—sent up a sound
Of anguish, and in phrenzy on the air
Springing, in his fierce death throes, fell amidst
Dismayed adorers and gasped out his life.
Shrieks o'er the panting silence rose and filled
The temple, and in horror shrunk the throng.
As o'er the accursed rites pale Nemesis,
Leading the Destinies, had come to blast
The sacrifice with sacrilege; but now
The Pontiff's voice, bidding his lictors quell
The tumult, called another victim up,
And stillness brooded o'er the stricken crowd.
Gashing the lifted neck, the popæ held
The brazen ewers beneath the bubbling blood,
And white-robed flamens bade the people note
The happiest augury—without a sigh
Or tremor, seen or heard, the victim died.
Then flayed and opened they the offering.
Lifting the vitals on their weapons' points.
With writhing brows, pale lips and ashen cheeks,
And failing hearts, in horror's panic voice.
The aruspices proclaimed the prodigies.
“The entrails palpitate—the liver's lobes
Are withered, and the heart hath shrivelled up!”

Groans rose from living surges round ; yet loud
The High Priest uttered—" Lay them on the fire !"
'Twas done ; and wine and oil poured amply o'er.
And still the sacrificer wildly cried—
" Woe unto all ! the wandering fires hiss up
Through the black vapors—lapping o'er the flesh
They burn not, but abandon ! ashes fill
The temple, whirled upon the wind that waves
The flame through smothering clouds, towards the Mount.
That, since first light, hath hurled its lava forth !
Hark ! the wild thunder bursts upon the right !
Ravens and vultures past us on the left !
Fly, votaries ! from the wrath of heaven, oh fly !
The Vestals shriek, the sacred fire is dead !
The gods deny our prayers ! fly to your homes !"
From the Pantheon struggled the vast throng,
And rushed dismayed unto their household hearths.
While from Vesuvius swelled a pyramid
Of smoke streaked o'er with gory flame, and sounds,
Like voices howling curses deep in earth,
From its abysses rose, and ashes fell
Through the thick panting air in burning clouds.
All save the haughty Pontiff, mocking fear,
Had flown the gorgeous Pantheon, but he sate
On the high altar, mid the trophied pomp

Of priceless consecrations to the gods,
Breathing his scorn and imprecations on
The dastard people and the blasted rites,
When, heaving as on billows, while a moan
Passed o'er the statues, the proud temple swayed
As 'twere an evening cloud, from side to side,
Rocking beneath the earthquake that convulsed
Sea, shore and mountain, at its hollow voice,
Hurled into ruin ; and his lips yet glowed
With execrations on the sacrifice,
When from its pedestal, bending with brow
Of vengeance and fixed lips that almost spake,
Jove's giant image fell and crushed to earth
The Thunderer's mocker in his temple home !

Like an earth-shadowing cypress, o'er the skies
Lifting its labyrinth of leaves, the boughs
Of molten brass, the giant trunk of flame.
The breath of the volcano's Titan heart
Hung in the heavens ; and every maddened pulse
Of the vast mountain's earthquake bosom hurled
Its vengeance on the earth that gasped beneath.
Yet mortals, then, as now, deemed deities
The essence of men's passions—swayed like leaves.
By orison or chanted hymn, from deeds.

Ere time had birth, appointed. So, within
Their secret chambers and the silent groves,
While Ruin's eye from the red living bolt
Glanced with a glare of scorn upon their rites,
The doomed idolaters, abashed yet fain
To win redemption from suspended wrath,
Round their Penates cowered, while magians came,
Sybils and sorcerers, to mock the mind
With mystic divinations, and reveal,
What prophets need not show, folly and guilt.
To avert the threatened vengeance, Egypt's spells,
Muttered in sounds the utterer made not speech.
By magic incantations wrought, called up
Earth demons to unfold the future's deeds.

THE SYBIL'S INVOCATION.

From the hill forest's gloom,
Where the lemures dwell ;
From the depth of the tomb,
Whence the soul parts to hell ;
From the dim caves of death
Where the coil'd serpent sleeps not,
And the lone deadly heath
Where the night spirit weeps not ;

From the shore where the wreck lies,
And the surge o'er the dead ;
From the heart of the dark skies,
Where the tempest is bred ;
Ye Demigods, hear !
Ye pale shadows, ascend !
And ye demons, appear !
To drink the bann'd cup ere the weird rites shall end !

From the ocean deeps come,
Where the coral groves glimmer,
In your trailed robes of gloom,
Making terror's face dimmer ;
From the crag-pass of slaughter.
On the voiced air of death,
Come, shed o'er your daughter
Your oracle breath !
On the night vapor stealing
From the marsh o'er the mountain ;
On the bland air revealing
No doom by the fountain ;
Ye Demigods, come !
Ye pale shadows, ascend !
And ye demons, from gloom !
To drink the bann'd cup ere the weird rites shall end !

Be ye blest or accursed,
Be ye famished or sated,
In pale Orcus the worst,
In Elysium the fated ;
If ye roam by the shore
Which ye never may leave,
Or in nectar adore
Where ye never can grieve ;
Be ye gross and malign,
Or elysian as air—
Come forth and divine
What the future may bear !
Ye Demigods, come !
Ye pale shadows ascend !
And ye demons from gloom !
'To drink the bann'd cup ere the weird rites shall end !

Amid the darkened necromantic haunts
Of worse fiends than the evoked, no voice replied.
Then, moulding effigies to suit her hate,
And dropping venom in each pictured pore,
'The Sybil, with dishevelled serpent locks,
And Lamian features, bade the fiend of fire
Open the ritual of hell, and read
Revealings of the Destinies—and then.

She drank from the bann'd skullcup poison draughts,
Pledging the damned ! yet silence looked reply.

And each Promethean divination brought (²³)
Nor shadow nor response ; the mirrored glass
Returned no image ; the drowned ring sent up
No echo ; whirling gusts effaced the forms
Of letters writ in ashes ; magic gems
No longer kept their power ; the daphne burned
Without a sound ; and every poison herb,
Though with unearthly skill distilled, no more.
Like Nessus' robe and wild Medea's gift,
Dispersed the agonies of maniac deaths.

Restless in doubt, the human mind hath sought
Knowledge in every hour of time, through tears.
Wasting and want and haggard solitude,
Anguish and madness ; hovering o'er the verge
Of the eternal ocean, from whose depths
Earth's ghastly spectres rise to mock at hope,
The spirit follows through forbidden paths
The meteor of its own vain thought, till death
Shrouds, palls and sepulchres the throbbing dust.
Vain were petitions murmured to the gods
Priapus and Cunina to dissolve

The spells of Fascinators ; the evil eye
Of the Illyrian or Triballi sent
Its wonted glance into the trembling breast,
Possessing, as they feigned, the soul with fiends.
Vainly, they wore baccharis wreaths—in vain,
Their jasper, rhamn or laurel amulets
On brow or bosom hung ! the magi dreamed.

Scorned thus by demon and by deity,
In guilt's delirium to Isis' shrine,
The multitude, beneath thick canopies,
As dreading the last hope of their despair,
Bear Pompeii's loveliest virgin (²⁴)—in the bud
And perfume of her sinless being doomed
To perish in the vault of mysteries,
That evil men, by shedding guiltless blood,
May startle Fate to speak their doom ! alas !
Must Death, from his pale realms of fear, so soon
Breathe on that beautiful and radiant brow
And leave it blasted ? on the blossomed lips,
Whence music gushed in streams of rainbow thought,
And chill them into breathlessness and gloom ?
That vermil cheek—those eyes, where thoughts repose,
Like clustered stars on the blue autumn skies,
That head of beauty and that heart of love—

Oh, must they languish, moulder, and depart,
Without a sigh, from the sweet earth they loved?
When has the bigot, whatsoe'er his crown, ⁽²⁵⁾
Cidaris, mitre, oak or laurel wreath,
Spared, having power to torture? when, the slave
Of superstition slackened in his zeal
Of loving God by loathing humankind!
Weep with the crocodile—embrace the asp—
Doubt not the avalanche of ages—meet
The famished wolf's sardonic smile—and sleep
Beneath the upas—but believe not, man
E'er yet had mercy when his guilt feared hell!

With hurried footfalls o'er the lava walks ⁽²⁶⁾
And through the Forum's colonnades, unmarked
But by quick glances, to the Mount of Flame
Turning again, the worshippers passed on,
And the proud temple gates behind them closed.
Then from the altar of the idol came
The crowned hierophant, in robes o'erwrought
With mystic symbols, emblems of a power
Invisible, yet everywhere supreme,
As the air that shrouds the glaciers, and, like that,
Waked to annihilate, by one low voice.
Lifting his dusky hand, gleaming with gems.

He waved the throng to worship, with hushed lips,
And, with a gesture, bidding neophytes
Come forth, and raise the victim, bound and stretched
On the Mosaic floor, in horror's arms,
With a hyæna step, through pillar'd aisles,
Dim, still and awful, to the vaulted crypt
Of gloom and most unhallowed sacrifice
He led the bearers of the victim maid:
One shuddering farewell—one shriek, that gave
A legion echoes, from her muffled lips
Gushed! then in gloom her hyacinthine hair
Vanished—and from the veiled recesses rose
The music of the sistrum, (²⁷) and strange gleams
Of violet and crimson lights along
The shrine and statues flitted momentarily
And faded; and mysterious phantoms glanced
O'er the far skirting corridors, and left
The awed mind wildered with a doubting sense
Of silence broken by what was not sound,
Nor breathings of a living heart—nor tones
Of forest leaves nor lapses of the wind—
But a dread haunting of a sightless fear
Of unformed peril—a crushed thought, that through
The twilight dimness of the fane o'erhung
Gigantic beings of diluvian realms,

Voiceless and viewless, yet endowed with might
To rend the mortal breather of a sigh !
Down the chill, dusky granite steps the priest
Guided the virgin sacrifice ; above,
The massy and barr'd vault door shut ; and night,
Shown in its ghastly terrors by wild rays
Of many tintured lights, fell on the heart
Of the devoted, desolated maid.
Through still descending labyrinths, where coiled
All loathsome creatures, and dark waters dripped
With a deep sullen sound like pulses heard
By captives dying in their dungeon tomb,
'The Egyptian glided hurriedly and still.
Then o'er a green lagoon, whose festered flood
Flung back a deathsome glare as the lights sunk
Upon its sleeping surface stretching far
Into the floating masses of the gloom,
They, in a mouldered barque, went silently.
The plated crocodile, on the earth and pool
Suspended, ope'd his sluggish jaws and looked
Upon the priest with fawning earnestness ;
He gazed upon the victim and passed by,
And the loathed reptile dreamed of coming feasts.
Rugged and spiral grew the pathway ; bats,
Waving the spectre lights, winged through the vaults.

Startled yet welcoming ; and serpents lanced
Their quivering tongues of venom forth and hissed
Their salutations ; and the lizards crept
Along the cold, wet ridges of the caves ;
And oft the maiden's agonizing eyes
Beheld in niches or sarcophagi
Mortality's abhorred resemblances,
With folded serpents sculptured overhead ;
And oft the feet of the familiars struck
Strewn relics of the victims offered here !

Winding through tangled passages—her brain
O'erfraught with the still horror—for no sound
Lived through the endless caverns—thought and sense
Of being fled from the doomed maiden's heart,
Time, mystery and darkness and lone death
Passed from the trances of her brain, and earth
And agony and wrong and violence
Were but the shadows childhood sports withal !
She woke amid the gush and hymning voice
Of fountains and the living gleam of fires,
And swell of tenderest music ; and beside
The purple couch of luxury, whereon.
Free from all bonds save chains of jewelled gold,

In a vast chamber, hung with flowers and gems,
She lay, the priest of Isis stood ;—his eye
No longer stern and chill, his lips no more
Like sculptured cruelty, but bright and warm
And moist with mellowest wine ; and o'er his face,
Late masked in mockeries, the burning light
Of Passion broke, as thus, with wanton smiles,
He breathed his heart upon his victim's ear.
"Thy path to pleasure, like the world's, my love !
Was through the empire of pale doubt and pain,
Where many visions of detested things
Will consummate in rapture deigned thee here.
And didst thou think, my queen of loveliness !
That by the dastard crowd of Pompeii
Thou wert borne hither that the sacred lips
Of Isis, parted by thy purest blood,
Might give responses to fiend-loving fools ?
The goddess hath a voice—when I ordain,
And, when her mysteries have filled their hearts,
With myriad terrors to which death is bliss,
They shall not lack an answer to their quest.
But this is Love's elysium ; men may seek
Another by Jove's grace—but this for me !
Be their's eternities of prayer and hymn !
But Time and wine and Venus are my gods !"

“Holy Diana! hath thine Iris (²⁸) come
To lead me through elysium’s myrtle groves?
Thanks for the briefest pangs of death! my soul
Blends with the radiance, songs and incense here
In rapture, unforgetting earth’s dark ills,
The victim bonds, gloom, terror, madness borne
Amid the vaulted corridors—deep thanks,
Chaste Dian! for the dart that winged me here!”
Thus she lay whispering faintly while the veins
Again like violets began to glow
And Thought from the elysian portals turned
To shed, once more, its starlight o’er her brow.
The lips, like rifted sunset clouds, burned o’er
With beauty, and the sloe-dark eyes, from lids
Of loveliness o’erarched like rainbows, flashed
Upon the luxuries of wantonness
With a delirious brightness; and she pressed
Her Peri hand upon her troubled brain
As dismal memories through all the pomp
Around her thronged. “Do visions o’er me rush
Through the ivory gate? or what is this? methinks
The limbs of Vesta pass not Charon’s ward—
Yet bear I them! and I behold no forms
Like the supreme divinities who dwell
Beyond the azure curtains of the skies!”

—

“Look on thy suppliant worshipper, my love !
Thy Saturn, my Osiris, aptly feigned,
With Horus and the laughing boy-god, wreathed
With lotus and charn'd myrtle, must be now
The only Guardians of our paradise—
For thou art the voluptuous Paphian Queen,
And must with kisses be adored ! thy breath
Is odor—on that fair full bosom sleep
A thousand loves—those lustrous eyes enchant—
And the limbs moulded by divinest skill”—

“Reveal thy speech ! what import bear these words !
Dream I, or art thou the hierophant
Of Isis, who from Mizraim's pyramids
Broughtst new gods into Latium ? I must err,
For thou wearst not the countenance that chilled
My soul, and tyrannized o'er Pompeii's crowd.
But rather, like earth's faun or satyr fiend,
Gloatest o'er some revenge for sin unknown !”
The maiden's lost mind came in all its strength
And purity, and in the dreadless might
Of thoughts unsoiled by evil, she resolved
To match unfriended virtue with the power
Of Passion in religion's mask beyond
The Law's arraignment or the avenger's wrath.

“Simple as Pyrrha when the shattered barque
Of hoar Deucalion landed from the foam !”
With blandishments, said Isis’ haughty priest.
“Knowst thou not, loveliest ! that holy men
Must never shame their gods by deeds unlike
Their sacred exploits ? what were deathlessness
Without delight ? eternity, without
The ecstasies of woman’s winning smile ?
Thy country’s hoarest fathers, most for skill
In council, and unequalled virtue famed,
In canon and enactment of old law,
Did consecrate corruption and commit
Captives to bondage of their tyrant’s will,
And build proud temples for the haunt of shame
Being but mimes of the Immortals, then,
As countless births, revered as prodigies,
And chained Prometheus, shunning their gift,
To meet their wrath, and mad Lycaon driven
Into the wild, can testify in tears.
Why, then, should the weak waiter on the rites
Of the Omnipotents refrain from joy ?
Folly must feel his masterdom, when words,
Called oracles, are bought, but, in all else,
The priest was framed for pleasure--and thy smile,
Hebe of Beauty ! from thy vassal here

Shall win a better augury than all
Campania's hecatombs!—time wastes, my bliss!
Speak thou the oracle I shall repeat
Through Isis' marble lips! the answer's thine!"

"Thus be the answer, then, "Ye seek my shrine
To know the Future and the will of heaven—
The Past reveals both!" or, if this suit not
The goddess who doth fold her tissued words
So Passion may unravel good or ill,
Thus let the mystic oracle declare:
"Ye shall pass o'er the Tyrrhene sea in ships
Laden with virgins, gems and gods, and spoils
Of a dismembered empire, and a cloud
Of light shall radiate your ocean path!"
Breathes not the soul of mystery in this? (29)

"Ay, love! and after his desire or hope
Each may interpret—veriest oracles
Must have a myriad meanings—and the voice
Of Memphian Isis shall, at once, respond
To the denied apostates; then, my life!
While dotards live on riddles and embrace
Shadows as did the Thunderer what time
The ox-eyed empress jealous of his deeds:

We at Love's heavenly banquet shall repose
And drink the ecstasies of mingled hearts !
--The sistrum sounds ! the sculptured lips shall speak !"

Exulting thus, the idol minister,
Pressing the bosom of great Serapis,
Whose statue by a Doric pillar stood,
Disclosed a stairway guiding through the shaft
Unto the altar of the fane, and thence
Within the hollow image, from whose mouth
Responses breathed that fitted any deed
Or æra ; fable was religion's name.
Up through the open bosom of the God,
Saying, (³⁰) " The mocker Momus has his jest
And more, since e'en the Immortal's breast bears now
A mirror"—passed the priest--and soundlessly
The dædal portal, bossed with vine-wreaths, closed.
That moment, from the flowered and purple couch
The maiden sprung, through any caverned path,—
All peril and loathed sights and awful sounds,
To fly from pomp, pollution and despair.
Bounding along the tessellated floor,
She passed the beds of banquet, whose perfume
From sightless vases stole, and gained the verge
Of the vast gleaming hall—she met the waves

Of black and silent depths that seemed to scowl
On her vain flight! to every side she flew
But to encounter granite battlements,
Coiled serpents, clustered sepulchres, cold cliffs,
Gigantic sphynxes, towering grim o'er lakes
Of sulphur, or the dreadful shapes of fiends.
The gorgeous lights grew shadowy, and stained clouds
Of vapor floated o'er the pillared roof,
Taking all forms of terror; and low sighs
And muttered dirges from the waters stole
Along the arches; and through all the vaults,
Into a thousand wailing echoes rent,
A shriek, loud, quick and full of agonies,
Burst from the deep foundations of the fane.
With steps like earliest childhood's, to her couch
The maiden faltered back, and there, with soul
Too overfraught for wished unconsciousness,
Gasping her breath, she listened! Sullen sounds
Wandered along the temple aisles above;
Then came the clang of cymbals and strange words
Uttered amid the far-off music's swell:
And the prostrated multitudes, like woods
Hung with the leaves of autumn, stirred; then fell
A silence when the heart was heard—a pause—
When ardent hope became an agony;

And parted lips and panting pulses—eyes
Wild with their watchings, brows with beaded dew
Of expectation chilled and fevered—all
The shaken and half lifted frame—declared
The moment of the oracle had come !
A sceptre to the hand of Isis leapt
And waved ; and then the deep voice of the priest
Uttered the maiden's answer, and the fall
Of many quickened steps like whispers pass'd
Along the columned aisles and vestibule.
None deemed, the maiden in the earthquake's groan
And the volcano's thunder voice had heard
The hastening doom, and clothed it in dark words,
The blinded victims never could discern ;
But to the bosom of their guilt again
They passed, dreaming of victories and spoils !

“Gone !” said the priest, descending—“Serapis !
Pardon and thanks I crave and give thee, God !
—Gone to their phantom banquet with glad hearts—
Such is the bliss of superstition's creed !
And they will glory o'er their fellows now,
Deeming themselves the temples of the gods !
Brimmed with revealings of divinity !
But Folly wafts us food, and we should laud

The victim of night visionries who parts
With virgin gold for fabled miracles !
But that thy loveliness might peril prayers
And change the rites to riots ill esteemed,
Thou shouldst have been a pythoness, my love !
What shadow veils thy vestal brow ? thou art
My bride, and pleasure waits upon thee here—
Let the pure wine awake thy thoughts to mirth !”

“ Mirth at the altar which thou mockst with jeers !
Mirth in thy holy ministries, proud priest !
It fits thee not—and less thine evil speech
To Lælius’ child, who, while her father waits
On royal Titus in imperial Rome,
Betrayed, it seems, by thy fit parasites,
Was hither borne by Pompeii’s maddened throng,
Whom thy vile minions goaded to the deed.
A victim, not to Isis, but to thee !
Beware, thou atheist pontiff ! the shocked world
Hath had and shall, through uncreated time,
Have mitred scorners, who blaspheme the heavens.
Mocking the faith with which they manacle
The hearts that would deny yet dare not—like
Thee, mocker of the idol thou dost serve !
Yet doubt not—years are but the viewless path

Of the avenging Deity ! the earth,
Elysium, Orcus, the sweet pleiades,
The weeping stars, the depths of ocean swept
By typhon tossing billows to the heavens—
All live but in the breath of one Supreme,
Whose heart inspires the universe—whose soul
Is Immortality ! and 'neath His throne
I kneel and wrap around my mortal fears
The robe of His immortal purity,
Bidding thee, Priest ! e'en in thy purple home.
Tremble amid thy thoughts of sacrilege !"

"Io Athena ! Pallas hath no gift
To rival thine, my loveliest ! thy words,
Like pungent herbs before the banquet, give
A charm, a flavor, an Apician zest
To the deferred delight that dawns in tears.
Coy maidenhood ! the sage in all his lore
Must learn the science of awaking bliss
From thee, supremely skilled in scorpion taunt
And torture, which prelude long lingering bliss.
But the wine blushes, Love ! to meet thy lip—
Lo ! how it kisses the crowned cup and smiles !
Thou wouldst not leave me—though thy free discourse
Argues but ill—for yon dim vaults, greened o'er

By the dead dampness, where cold serpents trail
And cockatrices brood, and livid asps
Madden with unspent poison ! thou hast seen
A portion of the terrors—'tis thy choice
To dwell with love and luxury and joy,
Or have a farther knowledge—come, love ! come !
The unfurrowed features of a priest may charm
Thy dainty spirit well as dead men's smiles
Sardonic, and the gleam of breathless flesh !
Are crimson pillows of the cygnet down
Less fitting thy desire than jagged rocks
Beetling o'er naphtha fires and festered floods ?
Or yon tapestried couch, thou wilt desert,
Less to thy wish than wanderings through the aisles
Of haunted charnel labyrinths beyond ?
Come, thou art wiser ! Passion is my god
First worshipped—next, Revenge !—my arms are chilled
By cold embraces of the goddess—come !”

“Demon ! thy power is o'er me—none behold—
The banded legions could not rescue me—
Yet I scorn, loathe, dare, trample thee, proud priest !
What art thou but corrupted clay beneath
The furnace ? but the loathsome bird that feasts
On desolation's relics ?—oh, there comes

A glad sound on mine ear—a triumph sound—
The deep earth-hymn of ruin ! hark ! it swirls
Along the abysses of the hills and seas,
Lifting the mountains with its breath—it comes !
Ye manes of mine ancestors ! it comes !”

“ What, scorner ! dost thou think to cheat my skill
With thy Trophonian dreams, when I have clasped
Delusions to my bosom since my birth ?
And juggled faith by all circean arts ?
I woo no longer ! thou art in my grasp—
And by the Immortals I contemn ! thou shalt”—

“ It comes ! the temple reels and crashes—Jove !
I thank thee ! Vesta ! let me sleep with thee !”
And on the bosom of the earthquake rocked
The statues and the pillars, and her brain
Whirled with the earth’s convulsions, as the maid
Fell by a trembling image and upraised
A prayer of gratitude ; while through the vaults,
In fear and ghastly horror, fled the priest,
Breathing quick curses mid his warning cries
For succor ; and the obscene birds their wings
Flapped o’er his pallid face, and reptiles twined
In folds of knotted venom round his feet.

Yet on he rushed—the blackened walls around
Crashing—the spectral lights hurled hissing down
The cold green waters; and thick darkness came
To bury ruin! Through the arches rent
And falling on he hurried, and a glance
Of sunlight down the granite stairway came
Like a winged spirit to direct him on.
The secret door of the adytum swung
Wide, and he hailed the flamens that above
Hastened his flight—when o'er the marble stair
The Nubian pillars of the chancel roof,
Thrown by the earthquake o'er the altar, crashed
Through shrines of gems and gold, mosaic floor
And beams of choicest cedar, and around
The priest of Isis piled a sepulchre
Amid the trophies of his temple, where
His living heart, crushed by despairing thoughts.
Found burial till the hour of havoc came!

Buttress and arch, pillar and image fell,
And the green waters of the gloom were filled
With hoarded treasures—vainly coffered up.
The maiden rose upon the quaking earth,
And, like the thoughts of parted love in youth,
Rushed from the mitred violator's home.

Through the felt darkness of the labyrinth.
On sculptured capitals and heads of gods
She passed the dismal waves, and trident tongues
Hissed after her amid the turbid foam.
She passed the beamless corridors and fled
Along a gorgeous banquet hall, o'erstrewn
With porphyry tables, alabaster lamps,
Half quenched, and shattered wine cups of gemm'd gold.
She grasped a flickering altar-light and on
Hurried, casting on dolesome objects round,
And nameless things of horror, glances wild
With terror and deep loathing; the death-dews
Upon the walls, green with the deadly moss,
Trailed in thick streams, and o'er her sinking heart
Breathed the cold midnight of the sepulchre;
And from the shapeless shadows growing up,
The startled spirit wrought the forms of fiends.
Or, worse, pursuers charged to hale her back.

The virgin flies along a corridor
Ampler, and living with the daylight air;
And far, upon its boundary, she discerns
An open portal, and a rosebeam gush
Of radiance streams upon the threshold stone.
Like Delphi's Pythia in her maniac mood.

She leaves the vaults of Isis, hurls aside
The tissued curtains o'er the portal hung,
And springs, bewildered yet exulting, through
Voluptuous chambers, frescoed o'er with scenes
Of earthly Passion in its last excess,
Where the mind melts in odor, and the heart
Pants in the fever of the earthborn Love.
"Oh watching Dian! whither am I led?
These mellowed lamps that burn in fragrant nard—
These violet couches—wanton pictures—shrines
Of chrysolite with myrtle wreaths o'erhung,
And jewelled girdles loosened—what is this
But Paphian Venus' temple? oh, the cells
Of Isis are elysium to the bowers
Of Pompeii's pandemic queen!" Away
She turned to hasten, when a strangled shriek
From the recess before her came, and sounds
Of fear and strife and hate and agony
Rose indistinct yet with intensest strength.
The maiden's only path of flight lay there.
She drew aside the curtain, and with hair
Tangled and drenched with vault dew, haggard face
And eyes dilated, like a sybil, stood,
A moment, in the very bower of lust,
Glaring in terror on two forms that strove.

And one with woman's weakness ; as she gazed,
The vanished blood, grief, shame and failing power
Had driven to the fainting heart, came back,
And, with a quick renewal of lost hope,
Casting the other, who with palsied thought
Gazed on the fearful visitor, aside,
The feebler being rushed along the aisles,
With ashen face and raiment soiled and torn.
The maiden traced the fugitive, and ere
The blood, now at the heart, might reach the brow,
They stood together 'neath the open skies.
"The Savior for thy service bless thee, maid !"
'Twas Mariamne—from the loathed embrace
Of Diomedes escaped—that quickly spake.
"I cannot ask nor answer now—but fly
With me, for peril's look proclaims thee pure !
Quick, maiden ! Diomedes will never spare—
Yet Mariamne once again is free !
It should be noontide ; but a livid gloom
Palls all things, and a ghastliness, nor beam
Nor blackness, wraps our flight and bodes an eve
The workers of all evil, in their pride,
Nor dread nor dream of ! Pansa ! heaven in love
Keep thy unfaltering thoughts beneath the wings

Of cherubim, and clothe thy heart with strength
To foil the fiend that dares or tempts to sin—
Where'er thou art!—we shall not fail to meet,
For all shall be abroad, and earth and skies
And waters shall commingle ere sun sinks.
Away! sweet maiden!—now the Cyprian's fane—
The equestrian Forum—the Prætorians' tower—
Are passed; and mid the crowded huts, that lie
Beneath the amphitheatre, we rest
Till the deep justice of **JEHOVAH** comes!"

"Art thou a Heretic?" the maiden said.

"I was a Hebrew and a princess—now
I am a Christian and a captive! come—
This garb and guise of thine declare, methinks,
Some mysteries of thy country's deities—
This day, thou shalt not fail to learn of mine!"
She breathed a strange word and a shrivelled hand
Unbarred a low dark postern, and a face,
Darkened and harrowed by the toils and thoughts
And changes of exceeding years, looked forth.
The melancholy shadow of a smile
And the sad echo of a broken voice

Gave welcome to the wanderers; and amid
The solemn stillness of their refuge fell
From the pale lips of persecuted faith
Full many a history of the martyrdoms.

The games of life go on! Madness and mirth,
Triumph and tears, the holydays of youth,
The apathy of stricken age, the pride
Of intellect and prostrated purposes,
Rapture and anguish, poverty and pomp,
And glory and the tomb—like rivals, crowd
Along the isthmus of our being, doomed
To vanish momentarily in billowy gloom!
The dewlight of the morn in storm departs;
The moonbeams strewing rifted clouds, like smiles
Breathed from the bosom of Divinity,
Sink ere the daybeam in the tempest's rack;
Yet on o'er buried centuries—the dead dust
Of ages—once like the starred heavens inspired
By myriad passions, dreaming miracles,
And winged conceptions infinite as air—
Time, the triumpher, in his trophied car,
Moves sternly, trampling ardent hearts to earth.
Oh, diademed Hypocrisies! budding Bliss,
The mildew sears—sky-soaring Hope, that dies

In its birth moment—Love, which on its shrine
Of incense perishes—and Fame, that drinks
The bane of human breath and falls alone !
The same arena, judges, wrestlers, crown—
The same brief transport and unsolaced doom—
First, madness, and then vanity—the world
Must be, till time is quenched, what it hath been,
The bounded circle of chained thought, trod down
By nations hastening into nothingness,
Echoing the groans of Pain's ten thousand years,
And drenched by tears that find no comforter !

With livid clouds of ashes, lava hail,
And furnace cinders all the air was filled ;
And through the bosom of Vesuvius passed
Groans as of earth-gods in their endless death,
And giant writhings, crushing the earth's heart ;
And through the tossing vapors, mingling flame
And cavern gloom, toward the Evening Isles
So loved by ancient sage and patriot bard,
From the passed zenith rolled the gory sun.
Like the ailanthus tree of old Cathay,
Whose boughs, hoar legends say, bloom in the stars,
The deep smoke of o'erhanging ruin whirled
From the volcano's pinnacle, and flung

Its branches over nations, scattering death.
The Appenines, looking the wild wrath and awe
Their woods and precipices took, upraised
Their brows of terror and magnificence,
On their eternal thrones watching the throcs
Of the convulsed abysses ; from the crags
The seared and shivering forests bent and moaned,
As o'er them flew the torrid blast of fate ;
And, as the molten rocks and mines began
To pour their broad deep masses from the height,
Vast trunks of cypress and of cedar stood
Charred, stark and trembling, and the castelled cliffs
Burst like a myriad thunders, while the flood
Of desolation, o'er their crashing wrecks,
Tow'rd Herculaneum, gleaming horror, rolled.

Yet men repented not of foregone crime,
Denied them not their wonted festivals,
Their pomp of garniture and banquet mirth.
Tornado, pestilence, earthquake and war,
Awe not the criminal inured to guilt ;
So the barbed poison arrow flies his heart,
His pageants and night orgies brighter glow—
Though death sighs float along the wine cups brimmed
With nectar mocking all calamities.

From the Basilicæ the Prætor passed,
(Thither, when foiled in lust, to wreak his wrath
On guiltlessness and guilt alike, he went)
Leaving his tyrant judgments, in a voice
Of jeering merriment pronounced, to fall
On less offending breakers of the law.
Prostrate upon his path, a mother cried,
“Spare, O Proconsul! spare my guiltless child!
He walked not with conspirators—spake not
To leaders of sedition—spare him, judge!
He hath no father—and is all to me!”

“The hordes of Hæmus may learn wisdom, then,
And virtue and refinement from his speech—
For he is banished—I reverse no doom!”
The lictors’ fasces o’er the suppliant
In haughty scorn went on. Another voice
Assailed the Prætor: “To a cruel lord
The quæstor sold my husband for the tax
Ye laid upon our thatched hut—and he groans
In bondage, while his famished children die!”

“Why am I thus benetted on my way?
I serve the senate and inflict their laws.
What is ’t to me who thralls or suffers thrall?
Let him atone! Why should he scorn to toil?”

“Justice, Lord Governor!” a third implored.
“Thy favorite Vibius hath cast deep shame
Upon my household and my daughter’s wrongs
Exact redress ; not more than this from Rome
Banished the Tarquins and decemviri!”

“Ha! dost thou threat, Plebeian? Vibius hears
Thy fierce arraignment with a smile—no doubt,
Some twilight kisses in the summer glade—
Pressed palms—clasped bosoms—dewy lips—no more!
And thou wouldst mock the majesty of law,
And wed thy base condition with the blood
Of my Patrician friend! away with thee!
Methinks, Vesuvian fume hath filled the brains
Of all the city—and the boiling earth
Bubbled its yeast into your grovelling hearts.
On, Lictors! on—we tarry from the feast!”

In robes of white, festooned by mingled flowers,
And ivy wreaths or crowns of amethyst,
The Prætor’s guests, on crimson couches, lay
Around the ivory tables, on which stood
A silver shrine and images of gods.
Pictures—the prodigies of perfect skill—
Hung round the hall of banquet, and to men.

The imitators of divinities,
Made venial every vice. In plenitude
Of power and treachery, their holiest Jove,
Masked to dishonor and betray, achieved
Shame's triumphs, and the wanton canvass lived
With Mycon's impure thought (³¹) ; there Bacchus stood,
Gloating o'er lozelries and revel routs,
As Zeuxis drew the king of catamites ;
Venus, the earth-born, mid voluptuous nymphs,
Reclined on myrtle beds with swimming eyes,
And sunbeam lips with morn dews moist, and swell
Of bosom far too beautiful, and limbs
Wantoning mid flowers, that veiled them not ! and fame
For matchless charm of genius here had shrined
Parrhasius' name ! and Passion's maddening heart
Burned o'er the walls, and rival statues stood
Beneath ; and there the last wild feast was held
That e'er was bought by Pompeii's toil and tears.

The kneeling slaves in goblets wrought from gems
Served acrid wine—on gold plate, bitter herbs
To zest the appetite ; and, glancing up
His haughty eyes, burning with hate and scorn,
Chafed Diomed upon his vassals flung
The venom of his darkly brooding mind.

“Be thy locks shorn as fits thine office, slave!
Or I may brand the theta on thy brow (³²)
Less undefined, and make the dust thy food!
Campanian servitude, methinks, outgrows
All wantonness;—and, Midas! thou art skilled,
I hear in tintinnaculating verse,
And lispest snatches of philosophy!
Be master of thy safety! I may lose
A pampered slave ere long—or, at the best,
The tintinnaculus may shame thy clink! (³³)
—Be merry, friends!—what tidings from the throne?
Ye have beheld the Temple of the Peace
Filled with the spoils of rebel Jews, where all
Treasure their gold and gems—a trophied fane!
The gorgeous fabric is a coffer! Rome,
The mistress of earth’s glories and delights,
Hath few rings now e’en on patrician hands.
What think ye, then? a sackcloth skeleton
Wanders and mutters on the Palatine
That what he calls Jehovah’s wrath will burst,
And in thick blackness bury all this pomp,—
Making Earth’s Mistress a stark mendicant!”
Loud laughed the parasites, and wanton gibes
Were cast on Jew and Gentile; then the feast
Of rarest luxuries before them glowed,

And, (bright libations poured to Vesta first)
The beaded wine was quaffed from goblets brimm'd.
“ Oh, I forget !” said Diomede, the light
Of the delirious revel in his eyes,
As in the opal radiance of the cup
They glowed, and glanced, with an exulting pride,
Midst costliest viands from the mead and main—
“ The fairest sport awaits us ere the games !
In the Campanian legion at the siege
Of that black Golgotha the traitors called
Jerusalem, a soldier served with skill
Whom Titus made decurion : him the plague
Of the new Heresy and Love, at once,
Infected ; and, abandoning the host,
He sought elysium in the caverns here,
Till Thraso found his philosophic haunt,
Where with his Hebrew Paphian he was wont
In hermit guise to play the liberal.
He dies to-day ; but for the present mirth
His tongue may vibrate,—Ho !—The Nazarene !”

The slaves led Pansa from the portico
Fettered yet fearless, for the time of dread
Had passed from him, and in his hopeless cell
The Paraclete had shadowed o'er his soul

And panoplied his heart to dare his doom.
Thus, as he entered, loud the Prætor spake.
“Hail, Gladiator ! did thy felon god,
Thy scourged and crucified divinity
Instruct thee in the sabre’s use against
The shaggy monarch of Numidian hills ?
Art thou argute and apt to lunge and fence,
Adroit and firm of nerve to meet or shun
The tusked embrace of the heroic king ?
Lucania and Calabria have poured out
Their thousands to behold thy feats to-day ;
And, gay as bridal banquetters, they throng
The arcades and the vomitories now
To weep the Mauretanian’s martyrdom—
For thou, no doubt, wilt triumph and receive
The twice ten thousand acclamations sent
To honor thy proud valor, as is meet.
Oh, thou shalt be anointed like thy Christ,
And not with vulgar nard by courtesans,
But ceroma and myron ! owest thou not
Thanks to the Roman mercy for this care ?”

“A Roman’s Mercy ! every spot of earth
Your banners have shed plagues on, can attest
With shrieks what mercy Rome has given earth.

Yet ye shall never feel the love ye boast
Until the slaves ye trample, rack and slay,
After the unanswered vengeance of your will,
Shall learn that they are human and awake
To imitate the mercy of their lords!
Perchance—'twas in thy native land—I know
Thee and thy fathers, Prætor! though thou sitst
In pride of judgment now—thine ancestors
Were suttlers of the Carthaginian camp,
When mine called freedom to the sacred Mount;
Thou mayst have heard the tale of Sicily,
Or read that Spartacus withstood the hosts—”

“ Ay, traitor and apostate! ere an hour
To gnash thy perjured tongue!” said Diomede,
Dreading his victim's speech, for he had lived
In terror of the knowledge of his birth,
Yet foaming curses. “ Ay, a million died
“In fit atonement of their rebel crime?”

“Crime? that the name of Liberty should be
The burning heart's perpetuated curse!
Oh, what can thrive in thralldom but revenge?
The thong, the goad, the brand of shame—the sense
Of ignominy, dreading to uplift

Its startled eye—what should they bring? and what
Must be the fruits of such a poison tree?
Condition is but chance, and none are born
With manacles upon their limbs! most crimes
Corrupted power makes such, and men submit
Because their vital veins have wrapt the chain.”
“Now by the sceptred Three who rule the shades!
Can his own heretics arraign his doom?
Such uttered doctrines would convulse the world,
And even here shall not be spoken—cease!
Thou cursed Christian! wouldst thou rouse my slaves?”

“No realm of earth is slavery’s—I would bid
The dust be spirit, and the brute be man!
I came not hither by my will—I am
Thy victim, not thy vassal—and if Truth
Offends, command thy serfs to bear me hence!
But here--and in the arena—thought and speech
Are mine; and from my country and my faith
I have not failed to learn the rights of man!
From the far hour when vestal Ilia sinned
And suffered, and Rome’s walls were laid in blood,
Have human hearts had peace, whether among
Helvetian icehills or the Lybian wastes?
Conquest was born of carnage and the spoil

Of kingdoms to a hydra faction given,
While sybilline revealments—Numa's thoughts—
With old religion sanctified the deeds
Of desolaters of the shuddering earth.
Scarce e'en for hours through all Rome's centuries
Hath the caduceus met the eye of day, (³⁴)
Or the ancilia idle in the fane
Of the fiend-god, whose herald is despair,
Hung: but far gleaming in the torrid sun
Mid standards floating to the winds of heaven,
On all the earth have cast the plagues of hell.
Boundless, perpetual and almighty Fear
Hath ever been your God of gods—rocks, caves,
Woods, grottoes, lakes and mountains are the realms
Of Dis or Jupiter's elysian fields.
And wisely named the sophist and the bard
The floods of fabled Erebus—for Rome
Baptized her sons in Phlegethons of blood,
Cheering war vigils with Cocyti songs.
Yon, by the Tyrrhene waters, on whose shores
The banished Scipio died in solitude;
The tyrant raised his hundred banquet halls, (³⁵)
Tritoli's stews and Baiæ's palaces;
The cannibal patrician daily slew
Captives to feed the lampreys of his lake—;

And Rome's all-daring Orator, proscribed
By princely friendship in his peril, 'neath
Antony's vengeance fell, a martyr—; there,
The astute creators of your creed have feigned
Your mortal hell and heaven—in Cumæ's caves,—
(Where dwelt Deiphobe, as in the wilds
That skirt the Erythraean, tasking faith,
Heirophila abode and muttered spells—)
And Puteoli's naptha mines—amid
The beautiful Pausylipo, whose waves
And woods in sweet airs and fair suns rejoice :
And maniac yells of gorgon sybils are
Elysium oracles, and Zephyr's voice
The music of the blest ; and loftiest minds
Worship in show impostures they disdain,
The phantoms of the fashion, that their spoil
May be the richest booty.—What reckon they,
The masters of men's minds, who guides the spheres ?
A myriad gods or none to them are one,
For all are nothing but fear's phantasies.
Sinnis or Sciron less obeyed earth's laws
Than they the edicts of almighty Jove.
The proud Alóides taught the souls of such—
They would quench heaven to win the fame of earth.
The all-believing, as their priests ordain,

Adore their fiend god through his daughter,—Sin.
Ye know not Truth in fealty or faith—
And seas of lustral waters could not cleanse
Your tear stained and blood sprinkled robes of guilt!”

“By Hercules, the earth-cleaver ! thy bold speech,
Decurion once and devil caster now !
Forebodes disaster to my king of beasts !”
Said Diomede, beneath a mocking scorn
Veiling the wrath he could not quell nor speak,
“Am I the patron of thy sole renown ?
And doth thy creed teach viper thanklessness !
I do immortalize thy robber skill
Learned in meet skirmishes with vulture flocks
And hordes of wolves to win the dead man’s gold,
And in Apollo’s image to the knights
Of Latium and Apulia thee present.
Thou art a lion-darer, and needst not
The famed Lanista’s discipline to lift
The wood-king’s heart upon thy sabre point,
For thou hast learned the sleight of fence, no fear,
From Galilean trainers, and hast wrought,
In thy maraudings, miracles of skill !
Rejoice in thine ovation, Nazarene !
Thou art the Sylla of the games to-day,

The Samnite mock-fight and the chariot race,
Myrmillo and the Gaul, the net and mail—
All shall give place to thee and Nubia's beast.
And while thy glory soars, sweet Venus wraps
Her arms around thy love, and sunset melts
On the pavilion of her soft delight,
Where she doth wanton in Love's revelries,
And kisses from her roselight lips reward
My service in the honor of thy name,
And fair flowers fan the glowing cheek of bliss!"—

“Mock on, blood drinker ! Mariamne mocks
Thee and thy wanton minions, whereso'er
Beneath the Orcus of your power she dwells.
Seek not through her dominion o'er my heart !
She hears a voice sweeter than Memnon's, feigned
To breathe daybreak farewells when o'er the blue
Of lustrous morn Aurora's gemlight fled ;
She feels the viewless presence of her God—
Earth has no power upon her stainless soul !
Therefore, again, I tell thee Rome shall wail
For all her havocs, treasons, spoils and plagues.
Oh, every empire of her vast domains
Hath its aceldama, where voices howl
Anathemas the future shall fulfil.

All power is venal through her fated realms.
The rebel's Rubicon o'ersweeps the land,
And all its waves are blood ! proscription's code,
Taught by the triumvir, is the only law
Left by unanswering Cæsar unannulled.
How many ages with their agonies
Have perished since the people had a choice
Of their oppressors ? What's the ordeal, now,
Censors and consuls must endure ? and where
The simple wreath that stories tested deeds ?
All the sweet shadowings of old phantasie,
The enchantments of religion, false and vain,
But glowing, in its earliest dreams, with love—
Arion and the dolphin, Orpheus.
And hymning groves, and awful Dis defied
By passion in bereavement, daring death,
The Sungod's pæans o'er the Cyclades,
The charmed illusions of the Blessed Isles,
The mystery and rapture of high thought,
That from the sacred porticoes and banks
Of beautiful Ilissus poured its light
O'er Tyber and the haunts of Tusculum—
All, now, have vanished—and the powers of air.
Your fathers deemed their witnesses, receive
From atheis t scoffers of the time defiled

Derision ; and emasculated vice
Gloats over memories e'en Pan might loathe.
—Breathe not a hope that vengeance will forget !
A darker doom, than his whose savage eyes
Glared from the marshes of Minturnæ (³⁶)—comes ;
A destiny more terrible than his
Who died blaspheming in corruption's arms,
Shameless in shame, at Puteoli—lours !
The voice of judgment hath pronounced on sin
Extinction—and the Avengers are abroad !
From the Ister and the Rha, the storm-lashed shores
Of the Codanus and Verginian sea—
From glacier steep and torrid crag—from vale
And wilderness—city and waste—shall rush
Devourers ; and a thousand years shall weep
In darkness o'er her desolated pomp,
And thousand times ten thousand vassal hearts
Live without love and die without regret,
Boasting their bondage, and in titles won
By pandering to an earth-fiend's lust, exult.
And call their shame patrician privilege !
The Goth *hath* trod the citadel ; the Gaul,
The Scythian and the Vandal and the Hun
Shall reap the harvest of her ruin ! Time
Wafts on the terrible revenge—the doom

Challenged by centuries of guilt !—I hear
The tocsin and the gong—the clarion blast,
The roar of savage millions in their wrath—
Barbarian yells like billows broke by rocks—
And where the splendor of the imperial reign
Floats now—I see a hoary head o’ercrowned (³⁸)
By the three diadems of earth, hell, heaven—
And the bright land of plenty trod by bands
Of bandits, famished peasants, coward chiefs—
All of Rome buried save the tyranny !”

“Oh, thou with the Cumæan prophetess
Hast hiddenly consorted and pored on
The almagest of Ptolemy till stars
And meteors have become the ministers
Of thy distempered fashionings of fate !”
Sardonic smiles o’er revel’s swollen lips
Passed slowly, and the Prætor’s jest had now
E’en from the venal sycophants small praise :
For crime in common natures, once unveiled,
Startles the practiser, and fear becomes
His hell, o’ermastering his daunted heart.
“And thou art thrilled by the sublime, and all
The grandeur of thy destiny o’ercomes
Thy sense with its vast radiance ! yet shrink not.

Though thou with Epaphroditus shalt live,
Empedocles and Barcochab, in fame, (³⁹)
Drawn in a prophet's robes and mural crown !
My own embraces shall solace the grief
Of thy rare Hebrew Venus, though thou diest,
And, if in dungeon thou art yet reserved,
A conqueror now, to grace the future games,
To her I will rehearse the tale and laud
Thy victory—and 'tis hard but beauty sheds
A guerdon on my service !—Dost thou smile ?"

" Ay, that thou talkest of *future* games, doomed lord !
And utterest thy revenge in mockeries !
Yon sun, mid brazen heavens and sulphur clouds,
Now hastening to the horizon, ne'er shall rise
On the volcano cities ; palace and shrine,
The battlemented fortress, festive dome,
Palæstra, amphitheatre and hall
Of judgment wrested to the despot's ends—
The household hearth—the stores of merchandise—
And many a lofty impious heart shall lie,
Shrouded and sepulchred in seas of flame,
Ere morrow breaks, beneath the burning deep.
And ages shall depart—and meteors glare,
And constellations vanish in the void

Of the pale azure—and a thousand times
Earth's generations perish—ere the beams
Of morn shall light the cities of the Dead !
Quaff, feast, sing, laugh, exult and mock ! ye eat
The Lectisternian banquet (⁴⁰)—to the dead
Pour out libations—gorge the appetite—
Madden the brain—let Phrygian flutes inspire
Your latest joys—be merry with the storm
That howls e'en now along the Fire-Mount's depths !
For me, the martyr trusts his martyred God !
And not for all your grandeur—nor for earth's,
Would he partake your banquet and your doom !”

“ Away ! away ! slaves ! drag the traitor hence !
And with the gladiators in the cells
Let him await the combat of the beast !
My spirit wearies of his raven croak.
—So, now for better mirth ! and yet the shouts
Of hurrying multitudes unto the games
Invoke my presence and the dial shades
The hour of carnage—do ye cry for blood ?
By Jove ! ye shall not lack, for never gazed
Imperial Nero on the sea of flame,
That surged along the shrieking capitol,
With such a rapture as my soul shall feel

To watch the lingering agonies and breathe
The last deep death sighs and slow muttered groans
Of that accursed despiser of my power !
Come, friends ! the people shall be pampered now.
One cordial cup to vengeance—then away !
The chariot races wait my word—the shouts
Rise like the roar of ocean o'er the hills,
And in the ghastly hell light of the mount,
Beneath whose deeps the Titans groan, the steeds
Caparisoned upon the towers uprear
Their heads, struggling to spring upon their course ;
And yon vast cloud of faces through the gloom
Looks with a ruthlessness that fits my mood.—
I mount the Tribune ! let the games begin !”

END OF CANTO II.

THE LAST NIGHT OF POMPEII.

CANTO III.

'Tis night in autumn, and, methinks, the clouds.
That waft the storms of equinox, along
The sunset seas of troubled light, uplift
Their countless shapes of mystery and might,
On which the watcher of Endymion now
Not e'en a glimpse of her wan beauty casts,—
As erst, they rose o'er Athens, when, condemned
By all profaneness and impure desires,
The Titan evils of a rebel time,
The Attic sage, (¹¹) amid the sobbed farewells
Of his disciples, drank the hemlock cup.
His spirit, for his birthage and the men
That by their deeds blasphemed it, all too pure,
Shrined in its sanctuary thoughts revealed
Unto no other in dim heathendom :

And as his calm benign eyes through the folds
Of the earth brooding tempest saw the realms
Where immortality to one sole God
Hymned anthems in felicity of love,
He blessed the few who dared be just when Hate,
(Deferred, till from the holy Delian Isle,
Which neither birth nor death might desecrate,
The pilgrim barque brought the Theori home).
Reigned, amid idols, with archdæmon power.
Then, with the gentle sadness of the good,
His soul forgave the foes that wrought his fate,
Callias, Anytus and the viper bard
Famed Aristophanes—and prayed in peace!
Thus, casting from his tried and weary heart
Sorrow and sin, and giving back to earth
The passions born of dust, the Martyr Sage
Ascended unto Being's fountain stream
To meet the mercy he so greatly gave.

With such a night around me, let me tread,
In these far years, his path, and clothe my thought
With a forbearing patience under wrong,
Neglect, rebuke and ill rewarded toil,
That so, like the aurelia, I may rise
From dust, and be a winger of the air!

Bereavement's lone lamenting tears and gleams
Cast from the memory of the dead, were all
The rainbows of my childhood : harsh behest
And bitter blame begot in solitude
The mood of melancholy ; shadowed rills
And forests mantled with fantastic vines
And peaks the lightning made its home, became
The accustomed haunts of boyhood that ne'er knew
In bondage the free sunny thoughts of youth.
(Hate's serpent tongue hath ever on me shed
Its poison, and with lidless vigilance
Storied the trials of the fatherless
In the dark volume of its deep revenge.)
Then, with but one in all the world to love,
I burst the thralldom of my orphan days,
And wandered forth to live in antique lore ;
Yet anxious present, pale remembrance, clouds
Prophetic gloomed along the deathless page
And hoarded in my heart their oracles.
From the magnificence of power, the charm
Of poesy and visions of old pomp,
I woke to feel the friendlessness of earth
And know myself a homeless pilgrim here.
Then manhood came ; the world stirred round my way,
And Time's ambition, eagle-eyed, I saw
Was man's one worshipped idol, yet I sought

No fellowship, but shunned the strife that sears
Youth's bosom with the torch that guides to fame.
Fame ! 'tis the dew-hour's solitary dream,
The sighed breath of the midnight, heard alone
By mocking phantoms whose reply is—death !
Fame ! 'tis the madness of consuming thought.
Toiling in tears, aspiring in despair,
That steals in Love's delirium, o'er the brain.
And, while it buries childhood's purest joys,
Wakes manhood's dreamy agonies to life !
Fame ! 'tis the voice of sepulchres, to earth
Uttering the praises of the gone—the hymn
Of the dust shrouded, over pale decay,
And sounding to the spheres the name of him
Who loved unloved and trusted traitor hearts,
Whose bread was bitterness, whose years, a curse !
Fame ! 'tis the sunbow o'er the abyss of Time—
A glance can melt it into showers of tears !
A glacier, hanging from a shattered peak—
A breath can bring the glittering ruin down !
A dream of glory with the seraphim—
Death's shadows gather round it in the dawn !

Therefore, I sought not power but peace, and love
Was my heart's paradise—the guiltless home

Of all my wandering and tumultuous thoughts.
But that was blighted by the breath of hate,
And the relentless perjuries of men
O'erspread the mirrored mind with tempest clouds.
The hues of morn and evelight, virgin buds
Kissed by Aurora, woods, beneath whose wings
The fragrance and the music of glad life
Breathed, and the myriad charms that solitude
Folds mid the throbs of its deserted heart,
Yet o'er me hold dominion; but the light
Of their first beauty and the tenderest voice
Of Nature, throned in holy ministries,
That, in my earlier days, fell on my soul
Like seraphim revealings, wear not now
The magic loveliness which memory feels.
Torrents of wrongs and calumnies, hurled out
From the Gehenna of revenge to fall
Upon the Hinnom of the world, have raised
In me the spirit of a dreadless scorn
And multiplied contempt of human thoughts,
And these with thee, O Nature! mingle not.
But time hath its atonement though I sink
Beneath the burden of blaspheming speech.
And die beneath the Upas in my youth;
And to the Avenger of far ages now

I do devote the ruined shrine, and raise
The incense of a spirit dimmed by tears,
Yet visited in loneliness by hymns
Of heaven and stars of glory wandering down.

But now the shadows of the buried move
Around me—beautiful and haughty forms—
Waked from the sleep of centuries to endure,
Again, the vanities of earth's best joys,
The certainties of evil—(mind restores
The dead)—and havoc cries ascend the heavens
From Pompeii's waiting thousands, while the groans
Of the convulsed volcano answer them.
The feeble and the famishing and slaves,
Whose toil a thousand years cannot reveal.
Alone are seen upon the public ways;
And every face is chronicled with care,
Loathing the lingering lapse of wasted breath.
The purposeless continuance of low toil
And want and thankless servitude, amid
The meshes of a wan and dim despair.
All else find pastime in the savageness
Of games where smiles and shouts are bought with blood.
Quæstor and ædile, senator and knight,
Censor and flamen, vestal and courtesan.

Noble and commoner, commingling, meet
Amid the portent horrors of the day,
Whose shuddering light to Pompeii bids farewell,
In torture to seek rapture, in the pangs
Of gladiators gored and Christians gashed
And mangled to proclaim their ecstasies !
The dicer in the midst suspends his skill,
Tested by spoil wrung from the heart of want,
To witness and applaud the guiltier tests
Of science ; and the banqueter forsakes
The wanton wassail of the flesh to seek
The richer revel of the bandit mind.
The spotless vestals the electric fire
Of Vesta's shrine desert and through their veils
Gaze, from the podium (⁴²) of patrician pride,
On sinless blood poured o'er the trampled sand
From the hot veins of causeless strife ; the judge
Bears from the Forum the remorseless thoughts,
Which, petrified by usage, have become
His Nature, never thrilled by mercy's voice.
The matron, whom dishonor dares not name ;
The virgin in her beauty angel pure ;
The warrior, who, like Blenheim's victor, ne'er
The strategy of pale retreat had learned
In the swift triumph of his bannered march ;

The merchant, whose integrity no thought
Assails ; the poet from his dreams of eld,
Elfland and wizardy and fabled gods ;
Sages, by their disciples canonized,
Who from Saturnian visions, feigning power
Without oppression and republics stained
By no corruptions, bosomed mid the bowers
Of the Evening Isles or Orcades--arise
To look upon the agonistes' face
Imaging hell, and with the Circus' shouts
Mingle the flats of philosophy ! (4³)
And augurs to perfect their oracles
Come now to gaze upon the cloven heart
And watch the spasms of Nature's utter throes.
And Pompeii's might and affluence await
The Prætor's voice, and the vast fabric gleams
With million glances and with million cries
Echoes, as from the tribune now the word
Of Power commands—"Lo! let the games begin!"

Cheered by the charioteers, who proudly stand,
Reining their fury, round the battlement
Rush the barbed chargers, like the samiel cloud
O'er Zara when the tropic burns with death ;
And breathless watchers, who, upon the race,
Risk many a talent, when they would deny

The alms of one poor obolus to woe,
Hang waiting sudden triumph or despair.
One wins, the prelude closes, and the host,
Like winds amid a wilderness of leaves,
Sink down and to the dread arena turn.
The trumpet summons—awful silence floats
Over the multitudes who fix their gaze
Upon the portals of the cells beneath.

They open and the gladiators move
Round the thronged circle to display their forms
Athlete and strong, and with the voice of death
Salute the ruthless Genius of the Games. (⁴¹)
From many a kingdom thrall'd they come—from realms
Spoiled by the locust hordes of Rome ; the Gaul,
The Briton and the Thracian and the Frank,
The Wehrmanne and the Hebrew and the Celt,
Every clime's vanquished—every age's wreck,
All codes and creeds, strangers or friends, contend
Here in assassin strife to please their lords.
One deep wild shout like breaking billows swells,
Hailing the victims of the carnage fiend,
And on the sands two stalwart forms alone
Remain ; and now Sigalion, voiceless god
Of Memphian mysteries, of all the host

Seems sovereign, such a quivering stillness hangs
Over the thousands, who await the fray
With eyes electric as the ether fires,
Lips sealed by passion, hearts, like lava, still
In their intensest rapture ! Bickering swords
Clash quickly, yet, with matchless skill, each blow
Or thrust falls on the flashing steel ; and long,
With fixed eyes dropping not their folded lids,
And marble lips, and brows whereon the veins
Burn like the storm bolt o'er ice pinnacles,
And heaving bosoms, naked in their strength,
And limbs in every attitude of grace
And power—they struggle, not in hope of fame,
To win dominion, or achieve revenge ;
But by their toil and agony and blood
To amuse the languid masters of the world.
From the free forest where he walked a king,
From his hearth's altar where he stood a priest,
Hither, in manacles, was guiltless man
Dragged for a mockery and gory show !
An erring glance—and o'er a prostrate form
Of beauty stands the unrejoicing foe,
Sternly receiving from the merciless
The still command to slay ! and now he lifts
His serried sabre purpled to the hilt

With that heart's blood he might have deeply loved !
One groan—a gasp—a shudder—and a soul
Hath gone to join the myriad witnesses
Who in the winds of northern wilds invoke
The Desolators to avenge their doom.

While o'er the sands they drag the dead, and strew
The place of carnage with uncrimsoned dast,
Mirth reigns and voices mingle everywhere,
Lauding the skill of the barbarian's strife
And the fine anguish of the dying slave.
Some talk of Titus, deeming him too just
And mild and generous while conspiracy
Mutters Domitian and Locasta's cup. (⁴⁵)
And some relate, looking upon the mount,
Traditions of volcanoes direr far
Than aught they have to fear in latter days ;
The depths of mountains boiling—valleys filled
With o'erthrown hills—and islands through the floods
Of ocean, apparitions, to the stars
Casting the torrid terrors of their birth.
Some say, the Prætor, when the lustrum ends,
Will govern Syria, and the sage surmise
That confiscation in Campania bought
The Senate's will that he should rule the east.

Wine, love, the dance, war, wealth, ambition, hate,
Earthquake, plague, priesthood, revel, rival sects
In faith or knowledge—yesterday's delights,
To-morrow's deeds—each, all, in various speech,
Absorb the mind until the trumpet sounds.

Again, scarce breathing stillness falls—again
The gladiators enter, and the strife,
Protracted but to close in death, goes on.
A Briton, from the land of Caradoc,
Whose daily breath had been Plinlimmon's breeze,
Beneath the weapon of the Gaul pours out
Blood glowing with the soul of liberty,
And dies, to Druid altars in the realm
Of Mona, breathing back his heart, whose voice
Andraste, (⁴⁶) in her home of vengeance, hears.
Triumphant shouts and quick expiring shrieks,
Dread silence and hurrahs and agonies
Succeed each mortal fray ; and oft the sands,
Dabbled by gory fingers, trampled o'er
By feet that fail beneath the crushing strength
Of the grim joyless victors—are fresh strewn
To bury blood which sunk not into earth.
But from beholding heaven drew down the wrath
That made almighty Rome, to every land,

A curse, a mockery and a shuddering jest.
"Three spirits wander by the spectre stream !
Are the great people glutted with the gore ?"
Said Diomede, for Pansa's trial hour
With an exulting patience waiting long.
"Sound for the Christians and the desert king !
It darkens hurriedly and lava hail
Hurtles amid the ashes ! we may rob
The God of Triumph of the Apostates' blood,
Or lose the rapture of their agonies.
Throw wide the portals ! let the Christians come !"

The mitred ministers of idol rites
Came on in bannered pomp and conscious power,
Circling the arena ; and the licitor guard
Followed with Pansa, and another form
That shrunk and faltered as ten thousand eyes
Searched out the fear that harrowed his pale heart.
Slow to the wail of Lydian flutes and blast
Of clarions breathing death, with looks of awe
Feigned and drooped eyes of mystery, around
Moved the procession ; and the Præsul's (⁴⁷) gaze
Wandered, in haughty majesty, along
The risen and revering host he blessed.
Few think, for thought is born of pain, and night

Hath not repose, nor day, free bliss to him
Whose spirit 's rapt ; yet all can feel and fear,
For that is flesh—the earth-born shadows cast
Around them by their destinies ; and they,
Who dwell in earth's abundance and from domes,
Stately and glistening, issue to receive
Guerdons of gold for oracles of wrath,
Illume not, save with fires of hell, the gloom
That curtains the black portal of the grave.
Virtue needs no interpreter, and vice,
Like palace tombs, mocks its own turpitude,
When painted o'er with saintly imageries ;
But Faith, that searches not, dreads every dream,
Becoming to itself a hell, and seeks
Heaven through the pontiff, who, in secret doubt
Of joys elysian, craves earth's richest gifts,
And at his votary's phantom banquet smiles.

Before the image—wrought by Phidias, when
His faithless country unto rival realms
Banished his genius—of the supreme Jove,
The Præsul paused, and with adoring zeal
Cast incense on the altar ; and soft wreaths
Of perfumed vapor round the eagle's beak,
The lifted sceptre and most godlike brow,

(The artist's mind was the sole deity)
Curled as in homage, and one blended voice
Burst from the thousands—"Supreme Jove is God!"
Then all the priests from every fane and all
The accolytes and soldiers incense flung,
And the proud statue proudly seemed to smile.
Next, bent and trembling, blind and dumb with fear,
A Christian came (from noisome catacombs
Dragged forth to prove his feebleness of faith,)—
Like the great Pisan (⁴⁸) who from midnight heavens
Could summon the eternal stars and fill
His angel spirit with their glories, yet
Abjured, in fear, before his bigot foes,
All the magnificence of thought, and knelt.
A hoar apostate, in the dust, to win
The lingering torture of a few sad hours,
And live—a monument of mind dethroned !
Onward he came with tottering childhood's step,
And with a face to all but terror dead.
He loved the light, adored the truth, yet dared
Meet not the perils it revealed ; and now
Unto the altar's horns he clung and gasped
His panic breath, and gazed beseeching round
In utter horror's wilderment, and groped
Amid the shrine lights for the frankincense,

With quivering fingers hurriedly ; but Fear
Had quenched soul, feeling, sense—and, as his hand
Moved o'er the porphyry with a mindless aim,
And the wild pantings of his bosom spread
Hues ghastlier than death's along his cheek,
A stern centurion, with a frown of scorn
And sickened pity, from the censer took
The idol odor and upon the palm
Of the apostate threw it with a curse ;
And ere the lapse of thought, his worship flashed
On the stern aspect of the demon god !
And, onward borne triumphantly, he passed
To meet, through every hour of haunted time,
Derision for denial of his Lord !

Hate on his brow and in his heart revenge,
(By bigot pride, scorned power and baffled lust
Engendered like the serpent on the waste)
Diomed glared upon the lofty form
That now before the awful statue stood.
No pride, lightening defiance, in his eye.
Dared the despair of fortune ; no wild faith
Waited for miracles ; but there he stood,
Beautiful in the magnificence of Truth,
Before the haughty scorers of chained beings,
The mightiest and most merciless of earth.

His thought above the proudest of them all,
(For Roman mind to Christian creed was wed)
And on the countless eyes, that watched him, looked
With the sublime serenity unknown
To natures weak or terrible as hours
And their events decree. No joy, no pain,
Changed the fixed features of a calm resolve ;
No glance betrayed a triumph in his fate,
Or doubt that might avert his martyrdom.
Upon the still crowd rose his gentle eyes
Blue and translucent as the heaven, as erst
The sungod, gliding up the glacier steeps
Of Hæmus, o'er the tossed Ægean cast
His deathless smile among the Cyclades.
Pure in his faith and passionless in truth,
He never sought to seal with agony
The creed of the Anointed, but, instead,
Shunned Paynimrie's resort and dwelt in wilds,
Distrusting the infirmities that oft
O'ersway the spirit ; but the fated hour
Had not passed by—the one deep love, that chained
His heart to earth, was parted, it might be
To welcome him to paradise, if not,
To meet his welcome there ; and now, beyond
The tyrant passions of the world, he stood

Dauntless mid heathendom, and thus, in tones
Strong as the ocean's, in whose utter deeps
The Alps may sink, yet leave vast deeps above,
He to the image of the Thunderer spake.

“Thou breathless Mocker of the humbled mind!
Thou Idol Image of remorseless power!
Shall being, quickened by the glowing blood,
In worship bow to thèe, a sculptured block?
Shall intellect, illumed and magnified,
Whose home is ether, whose immortal hope
Is deathless glory, render unto thee
The adoration of the Deity?
Oh, how should men be just when they have throned
Amid the universe, o'erswaying all,
A supreme vengeance—demon deified?
Whose common and commended deeds would crown
A mortal with the curses of the world,
And round him spread a solitude of hate
Haunted alone by grovelling infamies!
Well wast thou fabled—son of Earth and Time!
For all impurities and ills are thine,
Transformed despoiler! e'en thy votaries mock
Yet mimic thee, as well they may, the work
Of their own lusts! Canst thou call forth one star

Of all that blossom in the boundlessness
Of that undying heaven unknown to thee ?
Will Mazzaroth or Mythra soar or sink ?
Or terrible behemoth leave his depths ?
Or the proud desert bird feel nature's love ?
Because thou bidst ? doth thine own eagle fear
The power men quail at ? or the tempest float
Along Olympus, hurling arrowy fires,
In reverence to thy hest ? yet why is this ?
Methinks, I wander back to Pagan faith,
Thus questioning the hewn marble, which portrays
The apotheosis of man's worst revenge !
Beneath the unimaged, unimagined God,
Who hath no temple but infinity,
Where the great multitude of stars adore,
Flying along their glorious spheres—I stand
Here in thy home (it fits thy nature well)
And, without awe or exultation, dare
Deny thee incense, prayer, love, fear and faith !"

Not louder in its burning temple roared
The dread volcano when the firestorm came,
And earth's abysses quivered in their wrath,
Than now the voices of the phrenzied host.
"Tear the blasphemer ! let the wild beasts forth

To rend his limbs and gnash his living heart !
Impale the accursed ! chain him within the fire !
Saw him asunder ! cast his viper tongue
Into the serpents' den to poison them !"
Thus thousands shrieked—yet now the shoutings changed.
“Hark ! Jove the Avenger answers ! lo ! the heavens
With shuddering clouds are filled and lightnings leap
Through their gored bosoms and the thunder shaft
Bickers along the air—great Jove beholds
And hears—now wither, thou blaspheming slave !”

Awed yet untrembling, Pansa calm replied.
“Ye hear no thunder – but Destruction’s howl !
Ye see no lightning—but the lava glare
Of desolation sweeping o’er your pride !
Death is beneath, around, above, within
All who exult to inflict it on my heart,
And ye must meet it, fly when, where ye will,
For in the madness of your cruelties
Ye have delayed till every hope is dead.
Let the doom come ! our faiths will soon be tried.
Gigantic spectres from their shadowy thrones,
With ghastly smiles to welcome ye, arise.
The Pharaohs and Ptolemies uplift
Their glimmering sceptres o’er ye—bidding all

Bare their dark bosoms to the Omniscient God:
And every strange and horrid mythos waits
To fold ye in the terrors of its dreams.
—For thee, proud Prætor! throned on human hearts
And warded by thy cohorts from the arm
Of violated virtue and spurned Right,
And suffering's madness—though thy regal tomb
Cepolline proudly stand, thy scattered dust
Shall never sleep within it; years shall fade
And nations perish and ten thousand kings
With all their thrice ten thousand victories
Rest in oblivion, and the very earth
Change with the changes of her children, yet
The empty mansion of thy vain renown
Shall stand that generations unconceived
May ask the deeds of him who was cast out
By vengeance from his fathers' sepulchres!"

"Let loose the wild beasts on him! why are we
Thus left to bear the traitor's arrogance?
The convict's scorn? the gladiator's speech?
Let loose the only foe that fits his faith;
The Mauretanian's arguments are meet
And suit his mystic cabala. Throw wide
The cells and let the lion make reply."

“The outer corridors,” the Lanista said,
“Are filled with ashes, and within the vaults
Arches have fallen and no power can ope
The portal of the Atlas beast, my lord!”

“Bring a ballista, then, and shatter it !
For by the eternal Fates and all the Gods !
This darer and blasphemer shall not scape.
Let none depart ! why, would the people shun
The luxury of this despiser’s pangs,
Or doth his airy talk infect your souls
And sway your thoughts by oracles of woe ?
Spare Nazarenes ! who would o’erturn the creed
And code of Rome, and on the throne of earth
Exalt the image of a felon God !
Gather your wisdom, men !—so, dash to earth
The portal and goad on the savage king !”

Still by Jove’s altar standing, Pansa looked
Upon the fluctuating host around,
Some with fear trembling, some with baffled hate,
Some silent in excess of passion, some
Most earnest to behold the game of death,
And thus, like a cathedral knell, he spake.
“I show ye mercy none will show to me !

Fly ! ere the banners of the galleys wave
Beyond the cape ! fly, ere the earth and air
Become the hell that fiction fables ! fly
Ere carnage shrieks amid the torrent fire !
For me 't is nought—for you, 't is all—away !"
Yet, mocking truth and justice, all from flight
Turned back, and in the joy of shedded blood
Leaned o'er the arena. From the shattered cell
The famished lion sprung, with coiling mane
And fiendish eyes and jaws that clashed for gore.

"Take thy sword, Christian ! at thy foot it lies--
And let the heathen, as thou callest them, mark
And laud thy skill in combat ! take thy sword !"
A demon smile convulsed the Prætor's lip.
Yet Pansa, in the deep unshaken voice
Of Truth's immortal sanctity replied.

"The Martyr needs no weapon : his defence.
Shield, sabre, helm, spear, banner, all are one.
A breath from the Eternal—a quick ray
From the immortality of God—he lives
But in His mercy, dies but when He wills.
—Thou mightiest monarch of the forest beasts !
Who from the heights of Atlas, on the brow

Of perpendicular precipice alone
Planting thine armed foot, hast looked o'er sea
And waste, fearing no equal ; or among
The haunted wrecks of Carthage, in the pangs
Of hunger ravening, hast found no food
Where a great nation died that Rome might reign.
Thou fiercest terror of the wilderness !
Who, without contest, dost consume thy foe,
And walkst the earth a conqueror and a king !
Upon thee—though the extreme of famine gnaws
Thy vitals now—and thy flesh burns with stripes
Given to madden thee, and round and round
With Titan limbs thou leapst in bitter joy
Of human banquet, watching, with fierce eyes,
Terrible as is the simoom of thy clime,
The moment of thy certain victory—
Upon thee now I fix the eye, whose light
Was born of God's Eternity, and while
Destruction from the face of Deity
Lours o'er creation, I do bid thee kneel
There in the gory dust ! ay, by the Power
Of HIM who made thee, monster ! I command."

A roar, as if a myriad thunders burst,
Now hurtled o'er the heavens, and the deep earth

Shuddered, and a thick storm of lava hail
Rushed into air to fall upon the world.
And low the lion cowered, (⁴⁹) with fearful moans
And upturned eyes and quivering limbs and clutched
The gory sand instinctively in fear.
The very soul of silence died, and breath
Through the ten thousand pallid lips unfelt
Stole from the stricken bosoms ; and there stood
With face uplifted and eyes fixed on air,
(Which unto him was thronged with angel forms)
The Christian—waiting the high will of heaven.

A wandering sound of wailing agony,
A cry of coming horror o'er the street
Of Tombs arose, and all the lurid air
Echoed the shrieks of hopelessness and death.
Then through the gates and o'er the city rushed
A ghastly multitude, naked and black
With sulphur fumes and spotted o'er with marl
That clung unto the agonizing flesh
Like a wronged orphan's curse. In terror blind,
They rushed, in dreadful companies, along
The solitary Appian Way, and e'er
Their awful voices howled the horrors forth.
“ Destroyed ! wrecked in its beauty—all destroyed !

Billows of lava boil above the towers
Of Herculaneum ! we alone are left !
The lovely city ! all our happy homes !
Buried in blackness 'neath a sea of fire !
The deluge came along the shattering rocks—
We fled and met another—yet again
We turned dismayed and a third fiery flood
Came down in ruin's grandeur on our path !
Between the mountain and the sea we scaped.
Oh, many a corse beneath the depths hath mixed
With the consumed, consuming clay, and lo !
A Solfatara o'er our city rolls,
Boiling in deeps of blackness ! on—away !
What fated madness holds the death-games now ?
Rise, Pompeii ! fly, the Fates delay not here !"
Down to the dark convulsive sea they rushed.
O'er them the volcano, and beneath,
The earthquake, and around, ruin and death.

"Hear ye not now ?" said Pansa. "Death is here !
Ye saw the avalanche of fire descend
Vesuvian steeps, and in its giant strength
Sweep on to Herculaneum ; and ye cried,
"It threatens not us, why should we lose the sport ?
Though thousands perish, why should we refrain ?"

Your sister city—the most beautiful—
Gasp in the burning ocean—from her domes
Fly the survivors of her people, driven
Before the torrent floods of molten earth
With desolation red—and o'er her grave
Unearthly voices raise the heart's last cries—
“Fly, fly ! O horror ! O my son ! my sire !”
The hoarse shouts multiply ; without the mount
Are agony and death—within, such rage
Of fossil fire as man may not behold !
Hark ! the Destroyer slumbers not—and now,
Be your theologies but true, your Jove,
Mid all his thunders, would shrink back aghast,
Listening the horrors of the 'Titans' strife.
The lion trembles ; will ye have my blood ?
Or flee ere Herculaneum's fate is yours ?”

Vesuvius answered : from its pinnacles
Clouds of far-flashing cinders, lava showers,
And seas, drank up by the abyss of fire
To be hurled forth in boiling cataracts,
Like midnight mountains, wrapt in lightnings, fell.
Oh, then, the love of life ! the struggling rush,
The crushing conflict of escape ! few, brief,
And dire the words delirious fear spake now—

One thought, one action swayed the tossing crowd.
All through the vomitories madly sprung,
And mass on mass of trembling beings pressed,
Gasping and goading, with the savageness
That is the child of danger, like the waves
Charybdis from his jagged rocks throws down,
Mingled by fury—warring in their foam.
Some swooned and were trod down by legion feet ;
Some cried for mercy to the unanswering gods ;
Some shrieked for parted friends for ever lost ;
And some, in passion's chaos, with the yells
Of desperation did blaspheme the heavens ;
And some were still in utterness of woe.
Yet all toiled on in trembling waves of life
Along the subterranean corridors.
Moments were centuries of doubt and dread :
Each breathing obstacle a hated thing :
Each trampled wretch, a footstool to o'erlook
The foremost multitudes ; and terror, now,
Begot in all a maniac ruthlessness,
For in the madness of their agonies
Strong men cast down the feeble who delayed
Their flight, and maidens on the stones were crushed.
And mothers maddened when the warrior's heel
Passed o'er the faces of their sons ! The throng

Pressed on, and in the ampler arcades now
Beheld, as floods of human life rolled by,
The perfect terrors of the destined hour.
In gory vapors the great sun went down ;
The broad dark sea heaved like the dying heart,
'Tween earth and heaven hovering o'er the grave,
And moaned through all its waters ; every dome
And temple, charred and choked with ceaseless showers
Of suffocating cinders, seemed the home
Of the triumphant desolator Death.
One dreadful glance sufficed—and to the sea,
Like Lybian winds, breathing despair, they fled.

Nature's quick instinct, in most savage beasts,
Prophecies danger ere man's thought awakes,
And shrinks in fear from common savageness,
Made gentle by its terror ; thus, o'ercrawed
E'en in his famine's fury by a Power
Brute beings more than human oft adore,
The Lion lay, his quivering paws outspread,
His white teeth gnashing, till the crushing throngs
Had passed the corridors ; then, glaring up
His eyes imbued with samiel light, he saw
The crags and forests of the Appenines
Gleaming far off, and with the exulting sense

Of home and lone dominion, at a bound,
He leapt the lofty palisades and sprung
Along the spiral passages, with howls
Of horror through the flying multitudes
Flying to seek his lonely mountain lair.

From every cell shrieks burst ; hyænas cried
Like lost child stricken in its loneliness :
The giant elephant with matchless strength
Struggled against the portal of his tomb,
And groaned and panted ; and the leopard's yell
And tyger's growl with all surrounding cries
Of human horror mingled ; and in air,
Spotting the lurid heavens and waiting prey,
The evil birds of carnage hung and watched,
As ravening heirs watch o'er the miser's couch.
All awful sounds of heaven and earth met now ;
Darkness behind the sungod's chariot rolled,
Shrouding destruction, save when volcan fires
Lifted the folds to gaze on agony ;
And when a moment's terrible repose
Fell on the deep convulsions, all could hear
The toppling cliffs explode and crash below,
While multitudinous waters from the sea
In whirlpools through the channelled mountain rocks

Rushed, and, with hisses like the damned's speech,
Fell in the mighty furnace of the mount.

Tyrant not dastard, daring in his guilt
And fearless of its issues, Diomed
Frowned on the panic flight and in his wrath
Man, earth and heaven, demons and gods defied.
“The craven people—e'en my very slaves
Have fled as dust-born vassals ever flee,
And I am left alone with marble gods
And howling savageness, mid showers of flame.
Gods! I trust not elysium feigned by them
Who make the earth a very mock of hell.
Ay, roar, yell, struggle till your fierce hearts burst!
And with thy thousand thunders shake the throne
Of Jove, Vesuvius! and the world confound!
I have not loved nor sought the love of man,
And higher than his nature I know not,
Nor lower; and alone I sit to laugh
At mortal fear and dare immortal hate,
For, if aught die not, 't is revenge and pain.”

“Hath memory wed with madness that thou sayst
‘Alone,’ proud Prætor? one yet looks on Jove
And sees no deity; one yet awaits

The pleasure of Campania's haughty lord.
The hour and scene fit well the deadly fight,
Yet I behold no foe ; what wouldst thou more ?"
Pansa stood motionless and spake in scorn.

"Thou damned Nazarene ! the imperial law
Shall forge new fetters for thy treacheries,
Thy necromancies and apostate deeds.
Meantime exult, thank, praise and bless thy God,
Convict redeemer, buried deity,
That my condition fits not contest now
With thine, or wolves should ravine on thy limbs
And eagles' talons bear to mountain cliffs
Thy heart yet quivering with the pulse of fear.
Some fiendish potency foils me now ; again
Thou shalt not win fire-fiends unto thy aid :
Yet, Pompeii shall acclaim thine agonies—
Again, thou shalt not scape though hell arise !"

"Again we shall not meet in all the realms
Of universal being—all the hours
That linger on eternity ! we part
For ever now, each to his deathless doom.
But had not other creed than vengeance filled
A Roman's mind with merey, words like thine.

Now thy prætorians leave us twain, the one
With all to lose, the other, all to gain,
Would bring a direr parting hour, howe'er
Thy Punic blood and Volscian pride revolt.
Oh, thou mayst scoff! thou wouldst outdare the fiends
And mock in Orcus sin's undying moans;
But here we part, proud victim! so, farewell!
JEHOVAH's wrath is o'er thee—o'er us all—
The shocked earth cries unto the blackened heavens,
The mighty heart of earthly being bursts.
And thou shalt quickly know what Hebrew awe
Trembled to hear, El Shaddai—'t is a name
The phantoms ye adore and curse have borne
Vainly—yon mount is its interpreter—
THE ALMIGHTY looks in lightning from His throne.
Jove's shrine is covered with the lava shower,
The ashes gather round me! oh, farewell!"

Through deepening cinders, tossing sulphur clouds,
And victims shrieking in their agonies,
The Prætor sought his way. His harnessed steeds
Maddened by fear, had with his chariot flown,
The charioteer had perished 'neath the wheels:
And haughtily through all the Appian Way,
Among the whirlpool waves of human life,

And lighted by destruction's breath of flame,
He struggled tow'rd his palace, to the wrath
Of heaven fronting defiance, e'en while Death
Dwelt in the bosom of all elements
And the world trembled ! hastening to his dome,
Of power in Syrian splendors and a fame
Immortal as the flatterer's pander verse,
He dreamed ; and bearing to the vaulted crypt,
Whose labyrinths wandered far beneath the hills,
His gold and gems, he on his household closed
The marble door, deeming their safety won,
Whose strangled death cries rose unheard—whose bones
The daily sunlight of a thousand years
Ne'er visited beneath the deeps of death.

Pansa, meantime, in gladiator guise,
By other paths had hurried from the scene,
And now beneath the skies, where billowy clouds
Rolled in the awful volcan light, beheld
The fabric of destruction vast and lone.
Vesuvius poured its deluge forth, the sea
Shuddered and sent unearthly voices up,
The isles of beauty, by the fire and surge
Shaken and withered, on the troubled waves
Looked down like spirits blasted ; and the land

Of Italy's once paradise became
The home of ruin--vineyard, grove and bower,
Tree, shrub, fruit, blossom—love, life, light and hope,
All vanishing beneath the fossil flood
And storm of ashes from the cloven brow
Of the dread mountain harled in horror down.
The echoes of ten thousand agonies
Arose from mount and shore, and some looked back
Cursing, and more bewailing as they fled,
With glowing marl or ashes on their heads.

“Thou one great Spirit of all being! here,
Where power is helplessness and hope, a dream,
Here in the horror of the havoc, breathe
Thy smile upon my soul, and time and death,
With all their anguish, shall o'erawe me not!”
Imploring thus, the Christian held his way
Through the wild scene, with undefined impulse,
Nor shunning death, nor daring it, but filled
With emanations of undying faith.

A voice, whose tones, like music heard when youth
Lives in the visions of the blue blest heaven,
Thrilled the quick heart of Pansa, from the gloom
Of a lone street came forth, and bended forms

Stole from the hutted refuge of despair,
And tow'rd the Appian by the Forum fled.
And through the night the voice of age went up. (50)

“Tarry not, daughter! for these aged limbs,
Dust they soon must be—though the world revered—
And, if my hour be come, the woe is past.
But hasten, daughter! moments have become
Ages—the air, the earth, the ocean blend
Their agonizing energies—away!
Beneath the o'erhung rocks—where fishers wont
To moor their boats, now stranded on the beach,
The pinnacle lies I spake of—and the word
Is *Marcion*! Thither, without let or fear,
Hasten: a Christian from Tergeste (51) holds
Command, and ere an hour its oars and sails
Shall waft you far from ruin round us now.”

“Nay, father! to the shadow of your roof
I hurried when the violater's wrath
Burned o'er me—and thine own familiar fears
Denied me not a refuge! we shall sleep
Mid fire together or together flee.
Yet more—no barque shall bear me from the beach
Till the last hope expires that from his bonds

Pansa may burst to bear us company.
 Perchance, among the fugitives, e'en now
 He flies, and wanders by the ocean marge"—

On through the death-storm the Decurion sprung.
 "No, Mariamne! my beloved restored!
 Here, in the home of desolation, here,
 I fold thee spotless to my happy heart!
 And find my paradise in ruin's arms!
 But here we pause not to pour out our souls.
 A pinnacle lies beneath the cliffs, sayst thou?
 Thy hoary wisdom hath redeemed us, sage!
 Stay thy weak limbs upon my strength! on! on!
 I snatched the slaughtered gladiator's helm—
 Cast o'er your heads your mantles—so, away!"

Down the steep path unto the moaning sea
 They passed with quickened steps, and upward glanced
 The maiden of the vaults of Isis, once,
 Eyes floating in the farewell tears of love,
 As by the black and desolated home
 Of all her childhood's innocence and bliss,
 They fled like shades and to the ramparts came,
 Upon them, by the fiend-light full revealed,
 Wandered the hoary idol priest of Jove

In maniac horror ; and amidst the roar,
The riot and the wreck of earth and heaven,
Thus rose his awful voice in prophecies.

THE VISION OF THE FLAMEN.

Call in thy cohorts, Rone ! from every land
Thy power hath deluged with unsinning blood !
Call in thy legions from Iberia's strand,
From Albion's rocks, and Rhætia's mountain wood !
The foe, like glaciers hurled
Through clouds of lightning on the world,
Springs from his forest in the wildest north,
Scenting his prey afar :
And, like the samiel, from the waste comes forth
To steep your glories in the gore of war.
Hark ! the whole earth rejoices !
Sea shouts to isle and mountain unto main,
And ocean to the heaven, with myriad voices—
Rome's sepulchre shall be amid her slain,
And as she spared not, none shall spare her now,
But Hun, Goth, Vandal, Alemanne and Frank
Shall lift the poison cup all earth hath drank,
And steep her shuddering lips, and on her brow
Pour blood for ointment, and upon her head,
Till thousand ages have in darkness fled.

Mocking, press down
The accursed crown
Which shall not cease to bleed as conquered men have
bled !”

Thy monarchs, slaves to every lust and crime.
Shall fall as they have fallen by the sword
Or Colchian chalice, and unweeping time
O'erthrow the deities by dust adored.
And leave but ruin to lament
O'er pillar, shrine and battlement,
And solitude o'er desert realms to moan,
Where warriors mocked chained kings and called the
world their own !
The coal black petrel and the grey curlew
Shall wing thy waters and see not thy sail ;
From trembling towers the stork shall watch the blue
Of the lone heavens and hear no human hail :
For in the vales that bask in bloom,
The Pontine's flowers, the bright Maremma's green,
Shall dwell the shadow of the tomb,
In Love's voluptuous arms, the tyrant death unseen !
And Nero's golden house shall be
The pallid serf's abode,
And tombs imperial, soaring from the sea,

Shall guide the corsair through his night of blood.
Despair with folded wings,
Where the Eagle's pinions hung,
Shall cower beneath the throne of kings,
Who o'er the Alps the curse of hell have flung.

Woe to the beautiful ! the barbarian comes !
Woe to the proud ! the peasant lays thee low !
Woe to the mighty ! o'er your kingly domes
The savage banner soars—the watchfires glow ;
Triumph and terror through the forum rush,
Art's trophies vanish—learning's holy lore,—
Alaric banquets while red torrents gush,
Attila slumbers on his couch of gore !
And there the eye of Ruin roams
O'er guilt and grief and desolation ;
And there above a thousand homes
The voice of Ruin mourns a buried nation.
Buried, O Rome ! not like Campania's cities,
To wake in beauty when the centuries flee.
But in the vice and coward shame none pities.
The living grave of guilt and agony !
Alas ! for Glory that must close in gloom !
Alas ! for Pride that loves the tyrant's scorn !
Alas ! for Fame that from the Scipios' tomb

Rises to look on infamy and mourn !
But Vengeance, wandering long,
With many a battle hymn and funeral song,
Shakes Fear's pale slumber from earth's awestruck eyes,
And bids Sarmatia's hordes redeem her agonies !

Yet not alone the civic wreath,
The conqueror's laurel, the triumph's pride
Shall wither 'neath the samiel eye of Death ;
On Rome's old mount of glory shall abide,
Tiar'd and robed like the Orient's vainest kings,
The hoar devotee of earth's diadems ; (⁵²)
His glance shall haunt the heart's imaginings—
His footfall shall be felt where misers hoard their gems !
And from the palace of the Sacred Hill
The thrice crown'd pontiff shall to earth dispense
The awful edict of his mighty will,
And reign o'er mind in Fear's magnificence.
Prince, peasant, bandit, slave shall bow
Beneath his throne in voiceless adoration,
And years of crime redeem by one wrung vow ;
And age on age shall die—and many a nation
Sink in the shadow of the tyrant's frown
And disappear,
Without a song or tear.

While clarion'd conquerors tread
In hymned triumph o'er the dead:
And wild barbarian hordes,
Whose faith and fealty glitter with their swords,
Shall feel the mellowing breath of human love,
And dwell entranced amid romance and lore;

Yet from the awful Vatican no dove
Shall bear freewill to any earthly shore!

But he, the Rock amid the ruins old
Of mythologic temples, shall o'ersway
The very Earth, till thrones and kingdoms sold
And empires blasted in the blaze of day—

Awake the world—and from the human heart
The crushing mountain of Oppression cast;

Then man shall bid all tyrannies depart,
And from the blue blest heavens elysium dawn at last!"

"How like the gusty moans of tempest nights
O'er the broad winter wilderness, that voice
Ascends; and what a horrid gleam is flung
Along that face of madness, as it turns
From sea to mountain, and the wild eyes burn
With revelations of the unborn time!
We may not linger—shelter earth denies—
The very heavens like a gehenna lour—

And ocean is our refuge—on—on—on !
Yet hark ! the wildest shriek of death ! and lo !
The priest falls gasping from the ramparts now—
The breath of oracles upon his lips,
The Future's knowledge in his dying heart.
He reels—pant—gazes on the sulphur light—
(How like the glare of hell it wraps his form !)
Expiring, mutters woe—and falls to sleep
Shroudless in the red burial of the doomed !
On to the ocean ! and, far o'er its waves,
To Rhætia's home of glaciers—if God wills—
Look not behind ! a moment gains the shore !"
So Pansa cried and windlike was their flight.

The pinnace cleaves the waters ; heaving, black
And desolate, the dismal billows groan
And swell the dirges of the earth and sky.
Upon the bosom of the sea, the barque
Sweeps on in darkness, save when furnace light
Flares o'er the upturned floods ; and now they pass
The promontory's cliffs, and o'er the deeps
Fly like a midnight vision.—From the shores
Voices in terror cry, and countless shapes
Now in the lava blaze appear—and now
Vanish in the fell night, and, far away,

Pliny's lone galleys, dimly from their prows
Casting their watchlights through the fitful gloom,
Hear not the implorings of the fugitives.

THE DEATH-CRIES OF POMPEII.

FIRST VOICE.

Hear us! oh, hear us! will no God reply?
No ear of mercy open to our prayer?
Hath utter vengeance throned the accursed sky?
And must we perish in this wild despair?
Hear us! oh, hear us! will no mortal hand
Succor in horror—pity in our dread?
Woe! Desolation sweeps o'er all the land!
Woe! woe! earth trembles 'neath the Death-King's tread!

SECOND VOICE.

Oh, Fear and Gloom and Madness are around,
And hope from earth is vain;
The sky is blackness—waves of fire, the ground—
And every's bosom's breath—the pulse of pain.
Yet let us not deny,
In shuddering nature's agony,
The universal and immortal King!
But, rather, while we gasp,
Our dying children closer clasp, [spring!
And pass, with them, the wave where blossoms deathless

THIRD VOICE.

Who bids us sink resigned ?

Who bids us bless the Slayer ?

And mid the storm of ruin, blind,
Scorched—blasted—dying—breathe again the spurned-
back prayer ?

Let the Creator in his vengeance take
The life he heaped on men—

No sigh—no voice—no tear shall slake
The almighty hatred that could thus condemn !

He made us but to die—
To die yet see our city's burial first—

And he shall feast upon no wailing cry
From me :—take what thy wrath has cursed !

I yet have power to hate and scorn the might
That strews the earth with dead in Desolation's night !

FOURTH VOICE.

Blaspheme not in thine anguish !

We may not hope to linger,—
Yet, quickly quenched, we shall not moan and languish
In wan disease—emaciating pain—
And living death—when e'en an infant finger
Would be a burden ! oh, the fiery rain

Comes down and withers and consumes

The mighty and the weak,

And not a voice from out yon horrid glooms,

That shroud the Sarnus and the sea

Replies to hearts that break

In agony.

Yet shut not out the hope elysian,

And fold not darkness to thy breast !—

—My babe ! oh, sweet, most blest and briefest vision !

As at thy birthhour, here's thy home of rest—

My bosom was thy pillow—'t is thy tomb—

It gave thee life—and, in thine early death,

Thy latest throbs to mine—

—Oh, like harp thrillings in thy bliss and bloom,

While o'er my face stole soft thy odorous breath,

They touched my spirit with a joy divine !—

Thy latest throbs shall be

The warning that shall waft

My soul up through the starr'd infinity,

E'en where the nectar cup is by the Immortals quaff'd.

FIFTH VOICE.

And must we die ?

In being's brightness and the bloom of thought !

Sepulchred beneath a sunless sky !

And all the spirit's godlike powers be—nought !

Wail o'er thy doom, fair boy !
Shriek thy last sorrow, maiden ! for the doom,
That o'er earth's tearless joy
Rolls gory mid the shadows of the tomb !
The tomb ! there shall be none
Save dark-red shroudings of the lava sea—
The fire shall quench the agonizing groan—
Moments become—eternity !
And must we perish so ?
Sink, shuddering, thus and gasp our breath in flame ?
And o'er our unremembered burial flow
The pomps and pageants of a worthless name ?
At wonted feasts, no voices shall salute—
In temple hymns, no soul-breathed strain awake
Our memories from the realms for ever mute—
But o'er our graves barbarian kings shall slake
Their demon thirst of gore—
And redcross slayers march in bandit ranks,
From Alp and sea and shore,
To stain the Asian sands with hordes of slaughtered
Franks !
Wail for the joy that never more shall breathe !
Wail for the lore and love, the bloom and bliss
That to the ocean world of fire bequeathe
Their paradise of hope ! and this

Must be our only trust—to quickly die—
And leave the pleasant things of earth behind ;
Through thousand ages unremembered lie
Unknown to sunbeam smile or breath of summer wind !”

DIOMEDE, (*rushing in.*)

“ Away ! bewailers of decrees that bring
Rest to the grief and restlessness of earth !
Away ! pale tremblers mid the dawn of spring
That o’er the winter of your fate comes forth !
What are your woes to his,
Who from the throne of power beheld the glory—
Ambition’s grandeur, pleasure’s bliss,
Gleam on the Syrian towers like gods in minstrel story ?
Gone ! gone ! why, see ye not the eyes
Of hell’s own Furies glaring through the flame ?
And hear ye not the wild, deep, dreadful cries
That call in curses on the Avenger’s name ?
No barque to bear us o’er the sea !
No refuge on the mountain’s breast !
Earth, time, and hope like unblest shadows flee,
And death and darkness pall our everlasting rest !

What spectre sail sweeps yon ?
Now in the black night buried—now upon

The billow in the horrid light careering.
Like a spirit that hath passed
The glacier and the Lybian blast,
It feels not human fearing !
It flies toward the promontory now—
The torrent fire of ruin hangs above—
And earthly forms are standing by the prow,
Clasped in the arms of love !
O Hell of Thought ! and must I—in the fame
Of sumless wealth and power—sink down and die.
And, helpless, hopeless, leave the Prætor's name
To moulder with the herd's beneath
The mountain monument of death,
And be a doubt, or mock and scorn
To fierce barbarians, yet unborn,
When in the spoiler's lust, they seek the Italian sky ?

Ay, curse the gods who in their hate created
The serpent death that gnaws your core of life !
E'en in your childhood's beauty, ye were fated
To writhe, howl, shudder, perish in the strife
Of elemental agonies,
As were your sires by ghastly wan disease ;
And wrath, shame, guilt, despair, remorse and pain,
Their heritage and testament, have swept

Your hearts as vultures sweep the battle plain!

Then by the tears unpitied grief hath wept,

By lone bereavement's wail,

And Evil's dark ovations,

Bid universal Ruin hail!

And swell Death's monarch march o'er buried nations!

For me—as fits the Roman lord,

When hopeless peril darkens on his way,

I crave no lingering tortures with the horde

Who gasp and grovel in the slave's dismay,

And to the sick and sulphurous air,

Where Gloom and Fire and Horror dwell,

Pour out to fiction's gods the unheard prayer,

And seek in clouds a heaven, to find on earth a hell!

Thou one Omnipotent DESPAIR!

Whose shadow awes the prostrate world,

Thou kingly Queller of lamenting care!

Oblivion's voiceless home prepare,

And let Extinction's lightning bolt be hurled!

Banished, yet dauntless, doomed but undismayed,

Least willing, yet without a groan or sigh,

I go—dark Nemesis! thou art obeyed!

Thou awful Cliff! the billow's funeral cry

Thrills through my quickened sense,
That feels with life intense,
Yet, ere a moment's lapse, this soul shall sleep—
This form, a sweltering corse, beneath the unsounded
deep!"

Thus to the proud heart's last throb breathing out
Defiance and blaspheming wrath—though wrecked
And ruined, hurling his terrific thoughts
Of baffled vengeance to the shuddering heavens—
A monumental Memnon, sending up
Death's music to the burning hills of death—
Upon the extremest edge of awful cliffs,
That beetled o'er the blackened billows now
Howling their dirges o'er the expected dead,
The haughty Prætor stood alone, and flung
His agonizing spirit's deadliest glance,
The farewell execrating look of pride,
Unquenched by horror, unsubdued by death,
O'er hill, shore, forest, ocean—earth and heaven;
Then, towering like a rebel demigod,
And to the fierce volcano turning quick
His brow of fearful beauty, while his lips
Curved with convulsive curses, o'er the rocks—
Down—down the void, black depths, like a bann'd star,

(That tosses through the universe, a hell,)
Or demon from a meteor mountain's brow,
He plunged and o'er him curled the shivering floods !

Meantime, charred corpses in one sepulchre
Of withering ashes lay, and voices rose,
Fewer and fainter, and, each moment, groans
Were hushed, and dead babes on dead bosoms lay.
And lips were blasted into breathlessness
Ere the death kiss was given, and spirits passed
The ebbless, dark, mysterious waves, where dreams
Hover and pulses throb and many a brain
Swims wild with terrible desires to know
The destinies of worlds that lie beyond.
The thick air panted as in nature's death,
And every breath was anguish ; every face
Was terror's image, where the soul looked forth,
As looked, sometimes, far on the edge of heaven.
A momentary star the tempest palled.
From ghastlier lips now rose a wilder voice,
As from a ruined sanctuary's gloom,
Like savage winds from the Chorasman waste
Rushing, with sobs and suffocating screams :
And thus the last despair had utterance.

SIXTH VOICE.

“It bursts ! it bursts ! and thousand thunders blent,
From the deep heart of agonizing earth,
Knell, shatter, crash along the firmament,
And new hells peopled startle into birth.
Vesuvius sunders ! pyramids of fire
From fathomless abysses blast the sky ;
E’en desolating Ruin doth expire,
And mortal Death in woe immortal die.
Torrents like lurid gore,
Hurled from the gulf of horror, pour,
Like legion fiends embattled to the spoil,
And o’er the temple domes,
And joy’s ten thousand homes,
Beneath the whirlwind hail and storm of ashes boil.

The surges, like coil’d serpents, rise
From midnight caverns of the deep,
And writhe around the rocks,
That shiver in the earthquake’s shocks,
And through the blackness of fear’s mysteries,
Chained Titans from their beds of torture leap;
And o’er the heavens Eumenides
Seek parting souls for prey—

Oh God ! that on these dark and groaning seas
Would soar one other day !

Vain is the mad desire,

Darkness, convulsion, fire,

Infernal floods, dissolving mountains, fold

The helpless children of woe, sin and Time—

O'er fiery wrecks hath Desolation rolled,

The Infinite Curse attends the finite crime !

No melancholy moon to gaze

With dim cold light remote !

No star, through stormy spheres, with holy rays,

O'er dying eyes, like hope of heaven, to float !

No spot—the oasis of the waste above—

Whose still, sweet beauty glistens

Through clouds that heave and riot in wild masses,

Breaks on the breaking heart ! no seraph listens

In blue pavilions, while the spirit passes,

And o'er the dreariest waters bears,

Beyond the unburied's desert shore,

To skies ambrosial and elysian airs,

Where e'en the awful Destinies adore !

No tenderness from lips,

Blackened and swoln and gasping, steals

Amidst the soul's eclipse ;

Each, in the solitude of misery, feels,
Ineffable, his own despair,
And sinks unsolaced, unsolacing, down,
O'er-canopied by sulphurous air,
Palled, tombed by seas that terror's last cry drown !

Oh, still the piteous cry
Mounts up the heavens—"fly ! fly !"
"Whither ?" the billows roar
Among the wrecks and rent crags of the shore.
"Whither ?" the Volcano's voice
Repeats, bidding pale death rejoice.
Oh, Hope with madness dwells,
And love of life creates the worst of deaths ;
Hark ! world to world ten thousand voices swells—
"Resign your breaths !"

We die ; the sinner with the sinless dies,
The bud, the flower, the fruit corruption wastes,
Childhood and hoar age blend their agonies,
Destruction o'er the earth—the missioned slayer hastes."

Swiftly along the Pæstan gulf before
The Alpine gale, scudded the Christians' barque ;
Night veiled Lucania's rugged shore but oft
The dreadful radiance of the firemount hung

Upon the mightiest Apennines, and there
The giant cliffs, hoar forest trees, and glens
Of cataracts—gleamed on the fear-charmed eye,
Distinct though distant; and Salernum's crags
Spurned the chafed sea that rushed before the prow.
"Lo! Pliny's galleys speed to aid at last!"
Said Pansa, gazing through the meteor light,
Towards the Sarnus and the victim host.
"All shall not perish; oars and sails bear on
The Roman armament—and now, in hope
Renewed exulting, from the dust upspring
A thousand prostrate shapes, and on the rocks
Lift their scorched hands, and shout (though we hear not)
The late rescuers on; yet many a heart
Will throb and thrill no more, but buried lie,
Like its own birthplace, till oblivion rests
On the Campanian cities and their guilt.
—Salernum's rocks for ever from our gaze
Hide the dark scene of trial, and we leave,
With swelling canvass, Rome's imperial realm,
Where Christian faith shall, like the sandal tree,
Impart its odor to the feller's axe,
To seek a hermitage in wilds afar.
—Now, as we hasten, let our spirits soar
To Him who shelters when the avenger slays!"

THE FAREWELL OF THE CHRISTIANS.

PANSÆ.

“Alone, in darkness, on the deep,
Spirit of Love! redeemed by thee,
While fear its watch o’er ruin keeps,
Thy grace our sign and shield, we flee.
The billows burst around our barque,
The death streams roll and burn behind—
Thy mercy guides our little ark,
Thy breath can swell or hush the wind.
Thy footsteps ruffled not the wave
When drowning voices shrieked for aid—
The cavern’d billow yawn’d—a grave—
“Be still!” it heard Thee and obeyed!
From idol rites and tyrant power,
Now o’er the midnight sea we fly—
Be with us through our peril’s hour!
Saviour! with Thee we cannot die!

MARIAMNE.

“To men a mocked and homeless stranger,
Thy truth, love, grace and goodness blest
The world, whose first gift was a manger,
Whose last, the Cross! no down of rest

Pillowed, O Christ ! thy holy head,
No crown, but thorns, Thy temples wreathed,
Yet Thou the Death King captive led,
And through the tomb a glory breathed !
The scorner all Thy love reviled,
Thy path was pain, thy kingdom, shame,
Yet sorrow on thine aspect smiled,
E'en Death revered Thy deathless name !
The bittern moans where Zion stood,
The serpent crawls where nations trod—
Be with us on the mountain flood !
Fill our dim hearts with light from God !

THE MAIDEN OF POMPEII.

“ The flame, that wrapt my childhood's bowers,
Revealed Thee to my darkened mind ;
Thee whom e'en sybils, soers and powers
Of Night in Delphi's grove divined ;
With the dim glimpse of shadowed thought,
They saw the Atoner's form of light,
Yet pale doubt sighed o'er visions wrought,
The idol world still walked in night.
Now paynim dreams of dread no more,
The feigned response, the magi's charms,
O'erawe and on my spirit pour
The torturer's spells, the tomb's alarms.

On starlight wings, through blooming air,
 Hope unto heaven bears human love ;
Doubt, grief, lone tears, remorse, despair
 Haunt not the soul's own home above.
My chill heart cheered by thoughts like these,
 Far from my ruined bowers I roam ;
Thy love lights up the midnight seas,
 Thy smile is earth's most heavenly home !

THE OLD CHRISTIAN.

“Dimmer, like hoary years that bring
 Life's winter, wanes the volcan's glare ;
Destruction furls his meteor wing,
 Watching the desert of despair !
Now far before, the Æolian Isles
 Send up their vassal fires, but still,
Where fair Trinacria's Hybla smiles,
 Darkness sits throned on Ætna's hill.
Soon, by Sicilia's whirlpool streight,
 Our barque shall seek the Ionian sea,
And o'er blue Adria, pagan hate
 To Rhætian hills hunt not the free !
The sun, with beams that bloom, shall soar,
 And vineyard, vale, hillside and grove,
Sea, mountain, meadow, isle and shore
 Bask in voluptuous lights of love.

Yet darker ruin must descend,

Which man alone on man may rain.

And locust king and harlot fiend

With the heart's wrecks strew mount and plain.

Away! the grave's wild shadows swim

O'er my pale eve of autumn days;

Away! the wild to harp and hymn

Like sphere-voiced choirs, shall breathe, O Christ! Thy
love and praise!"

* * * * *

'T is summer's tenderest twilight, and the woods
Glow like an inner glory of the mind,
And rills, veining the verdure, and among
Vines, rose-lipp'd flowers and odorous shrubs in mirth
And music dancing, purl from fountains known
But to the gnomes and kobalds of the Alps—
Mysterious springs, o'er which eternal night
Watches and weeps in solitude, her tears
Mingling, at last, with the green ocean deeps.
Brightness and beauty, love and blessedness
Breathe on each other's bosoms, while afar,
From jagged cliffs the torrent cataract
Hymns the Omnipotent; and from the brows
Of desolate peaks ice-diademed, which thought
Alone may climb, the mountain avalanche.

Vast Ruin, falls and with it ruin bears.
All else is loneliness, beauty and love,
Peace and a hallowed stillness, and the souls
Of the lone mountain dwellers, in the hush
Of solitude and nature's majesty,
Partake the sanctity and power around.
The sunbow o'er precipitated floods—
The ice-lakes, and ravines where chaos dwells
And desolation ; flowers beneath snow-hills,
Where the great sun looks wan—the mightiest pines,
Rooted in chasms, that o'er the unfathomed gorge
Hang, wave and murmur—vales of paradise,
That smile upon suspended horror—all
With memories and oracles and dreams,
Time's hopes, eternity's imaginings,
Infinity's vast grandeur, the meek love
Of birthplace home,—the boundlessness of power,
The holiness of earth's reliance—fill
The awed and yet exultant intellect !

Flowered fields and harvests bloom around the door
Of a lone forest cottage, and amidst
The Eden of the wild a hoary head
Is lifted and the wan lips move in prayer.
Around, three beings kneel in thought o'erawed.

Vesper responses breathing from high hearts,
The ordeal of the paynim sternly proved—
And Echo whispers in the clefted rocks.

From meek adorings and communing love,
Then rose they, not as worshippers arise
In latter days of evil, with proud eyes
And minds revenge corrodes, but violet-like,
And gentle as the dawn breath of sweet May,
Patient, serene and robed in holy thoughts.

Dayspring and dewbeam, thus, year after year,
Dawned and departed, and the seasons had
Their own peculiar joys in Pansa's home.
And there—the Roman Convert's testament—
The storm-nursed heritors of Faith, blasphemed.
Throned Liberty on Alpine pinnacles,
And bade her temple be the Switzer hills.
There in love worshipped, there with hoar hairs died
The Christians, but the deathless spirit Rome
Gave to her son, and Mariamne's heart,
Bequeathed—in Freedom and God's holy Law,
With tyrant Wrong warred through Guilt's thousand
years.

LAYS AND LEGENDS.

LAYS AND LEGENDS.

THE LAY OF THE FATHERLESS.

Thou! that in pangs didst give me mortal birth,
Nourish my helplessness at thy life's spring,
And bear me gently o'er the desert earth
Upon thy bosom till my thoughts took wing!
Thou! that in days of deepened grief, didst fling
The mornlight of thy smile, thy voice of joy
O'er my quick spirit, till each human thing
Glowed with the outbreking glory of the sky,
And o'er the bosom gushed of thy devoted boy!

In pain and peril, when thy years were few,
And Death's vast shadow on thy pathway fell,
Thou to the greatness of thy trial grew,
Bade fortune, mirth and cherished hope farewell,

Resigned, for me, with sorrow long to dwell !
Thy sleepless eye my daring steps pursued,
Thy lone heart o'er my guarded couch did swell.
And o'er thy child's untrodden solitude
Thy thoughts like seraphs flew, the messengers of Good.

That harrowed brow, once smooth as Parian stone,
That hollow eye, erst filled with Love's own light,
Dimmed by the gloom thro' memory's temple thrown—
That pale cheek, writ in characters of night,
That wasted form, which, ere the hour of blight,
Stood proudly up in worshipped loveliness—
All to my soul reveal the charm and might
Of deathless Love, that dares unsoothed distress,
And from the shrine of Truth can guide and shield and
 bless.

Should I forget the heart that never quailed,
Nor shrunk from fast and vigil for my sake :
Could I forget the faith that never failed,
The solitary star on youth's wild wake :
Justly my MAKER from my soul would take
The hope that wings me to a heaven of light,
And leave me in the waste alone to slake
The death-thirst, burning through the mornless night.
Of the seared heart that loved not Love in its delight.

Bereaved of all that gave thy being bliss,
Save one unfortun'd and unfriended child,
Without thy crown of gladness, and the kiss
Of wed affection cheering through the wild,
Thy spirit on my saddened seasons smiled ;
Thou in my being didst condense thine own,
While poverty assailed and power beguiled,
And sickness made in solitude its moan—
And can I e'er forget what thou hast dared and done !

Can matin orison and vesper hymn,
Soaring when slept earth's dagon soul of guile,
E'er cease to thrill, while shades of sorrow swim,
Memory, whose thoughts with thine own look now smile!
Can twilight meadow and hushed temple aisle
Cease to enchant and hallow with their songs ?
Or commune with wood, mount, vale, stream, the while,
Pass from my spirit 'mid the world's deep wrongs ?
Thy wisdom triumphs o'er life's vain vindictive throngs.

Beauty in loneliness her image wrought
Within my wrapt unsolac'd bosom—thou
Ledst grandeur to the still throne of my thought,
And badst me drink heaven's waters from the brow

Of the hoar giant precipice ! and now,
Albeit, men skill not to scan me right,
Thy lessons lead me, as by palmer vow,
Through trial, toil, hate, grief, the watching night,
And weary day, like them who tracked the Horeb light.

Yet this is but a portion of my debt,
My Mother ! thou amidst my foes hast stood,
As, in his eyrie, when the air is jet
With wings of obscene birds and beaks of blood,
The eagle stands—lord of the solitude !
Their shafts have broken on thy bosom—thou
Hast grasped the arrows—struggled with the flood—
Borne more than all my sufferings, and liv'st now
To bear day's toil for me and those that round me grow.

And can this be forgotten ? can I shrink
To brand the mortal demon who shall dare
To doubt thy matchless love ? and from the brink,
Dragged from the vile crypt of his serpent lair,
Hurl him blaspheming in his writh'd despair ?
No ! thou hast dared the torrent—trod the waste
Through life for me—and, witness earth and air !
The heart, that but for thee to dust had passed,
Shall bleed, ere venom more upon thy truth is cast !

Let thy foes wither in the worthlessness,
The scorn of coward vengeance ! that the name
Of thine assailer in thy long distress
Fitted the lips of even a moment's fame !
Oh, on his brow the infamies of shame,
Branded by agonies should fall and rot
Into his heart and brain till earth should claim
No portion of his vileness, but his lot
Be with corruption which in death decayeth not !

Let the fiend hear ! he hath not checked my thought—
My heritage was sorrow and hath been,
Yet poverty and grief not vain have wrought,
And I can scorn and pass the base unseen,
And deem their malice, jest, howe'er they ween !
But there shall come a time—'t is but delayed—
When ye, forgers of falsehood ! cannot screen
Your bosoms from the lightning ! ye have made
The storm your couch—and ye shall lie there mocked
and flayed.

For they, the loving and beloved, whom hate
Hath hunted from the birth of being, bear
My burthen, and the trials of my fate,
Because your calumnies defile the air !

And shall ye be forgotten? when the fair
And matchless forms of earth, sea, heaven and mind.
Have worn the wan looks of a sick despair,
And I have wandered like the homeless wind,
Foreboding doubt before and many woes behind!

Hope not oblivion! e'en your bread is bought
With lies, a libel press pours out the bane
That in your rank heart festers; ye have sought
The spoils of long revenge, and by the pain
Ye round my household hearth have shed, your gain
Shall be—Derision; and in future time,
When earth casts up your names and deeds profane.
Rotting in curses, o'er your dastard crime,
The shouts of hell shall roll and hail ye to its clime!

HIPPIAS, THE TRAITOR OF MARATHON.

Hipparchus and Hippias, called the Pisistratidæ, the sons of Pisistratus, who during the latter years of Solon, through artifice and treachery, acquired the sovereignty of Athens, by many acts of arbitrary exaction and cruelty, had awaked the vengeance of the Athenians. Harmodius and Aristogiton led the revolt, (indeed the inhabitants of Athens had never acknowledged the authority of Pisistratus or his sons,) and slew Hipparchus, while Hippias escaped into the castle of the Acropolis, and exercised, for three years after, the most atrocious severities upon all, whom by fraud or violence, he could seize and torture. I have supposed Harmodius dead, and Aristogiton living, till the battle of Marathon, though the anachronism is obvious enough. Clisthenes, who contributed so much to expel Hippias, afterwards invented the ostracism, and was himself the first sufferer. The Panatheneæ, which the Athenians are supposed to be celebrating, in the first part of the Poem, was the most splendid festival of Attica: and the month Hecatombæon, in which it was solemnized, being the period of the accession of the Archons and Thesmothetæ to office, would naturally awaken the people to the assertion of their rights.

Autumnal twilight on the Zephyr's wing
Hovered o'er Athens, and its iris hues
Blended with ether's vestal blue, breathed o'er
By the favonian airs, and with the clouds
Pavilioned in the heavens, or diamond stars
Now in their lustrous beauty coming forth.
The myrtle and rose-flowered acacia flung

Their vesper fragrance on the mellow breeze ;
The illumined sea, dimpling with smiles, sent up
The gentlest music to the parting light
And dawning Pleiades, and, man might dream,
The tritons with Poseidon, in a heaven
Beneath the emerald billows, mid strange flowers,
O'erclustering coral temples, dwelt and sung.
The vales of Arcady, from meads of thyme
And hallowed fountains, for dim oracles .
Renowned, uplifted evening orisons,
With forest hymns of the hoar hills, whose brows
Gleamed in the earliest and latest light,
Rejoicing in the loveliness of eve.
And many a woodland pipe and cithern hailed
Familiar constellations, as the blaze
Of the divine Hyperion left the skies
To the dominion of Love's blessed stars.

Yet 'mid the pomp of luxuries, within
Athena's citadel, in broidered robes,
And tossing on his purple banquet couch
In torture, lay the racked but noble form
Of one who cursed the sunlight, and shut out
The holy influences of the heaven,
Loathing the beauty passion in his soul

Had darkened with its midnight, and in wrath
Shunning the spirit of magnificence
He felt not in his bosom's depth of gloom.
Among the splendors of a power, erewhile
By treachery grasped, yet ministered with thoughts
Of grandeur, lay the last, least-gifted heart
Whose pulses bounded with the glowing blood
Of Pisistratus : o'er his lofty brow,
And lips of beauty—which disdained the soul
That mocked them with its weak and evil powers—
The chill dews of an agony, that shook
Aside the veil that masked it to the world,
Gushed, and in dark lines o'er his countenance
The tempest of a foiled ambition fell.
From burnished shield, statue and gleaming lance,
Gem-hilted sabre and the pictured tomes
Of Scio's deathless bard, and all the pomp
Of pillared porticoes, he turned and breathed
Quick, panting execrations, as the breeze
Rustled the olives of the Parthenon,
Or with the orange leaves, like oreads, played.
Listening with the intensest hope and fear,
He rose upon the couch and forward leaned ;
His pale lips writhed as if their scorpion curves
Could fill his curse with venom—and his brow,

Convulsed by pangs of guilt, e'en now in youth
Burned with the ghastly light of blasted fame.

“The Egyptian could not err—the Acropolis
Hath never fail'd its master ! yet the yells
Of the wild faction—the dust-eaters—daunt
My spirit—and I feel the spear-point glide
Along my heart, whene'er Hipparchus' doom
Darkens the mirror of fierce memories !”
Thus in his solitude the tyrant spake.
“A footfall echoes on the corridor !
Was't not a voice beneath ? he comes to bring
The soldiers of the isles unto my aid.
Ay, shout, and shriek, and with your torchlight glare,
Affright the heavens, ye faithless herd of serfs !
I know ye merciless—can I be less ?
Howl in your wild Panathenea, howl !
Your festival may close with unhop'd feasts,
Your saturnalia with the clank of chains !
My trusted Medon comes with tidings fit
To soothe my ear shocked by your Teian oaths.
A nearer step—and a white banner borne
Proudly—he comes with succor in his smile !”
A lofty shadow crossed the vestibule,
And in the purple twilight silent stood

Before the tyrant, who but ill discerned
Through the vast hall of revelries the face
That with a marble sternness searched his soul.
“Speak, Medon! will the isles avenge our cause,
And crush the rebel slaves that seek our death?”

“Gaze with a better judgment, Hippias! once
Clothed with a power thou dost no longer hold.
Thou seest no Medon! but the herald-king
Of the Amphyctions—who thus, from them
Bids thee resign the citadel, and part
For ever from the shores thy crimes have cursed—
Or struggle with the vengeance thou hast raised!”

“Ha! ’t is a gracious message, and I thank
The artizans of Athens for their love;
But what my father builded and the blood
Of bold Hipparchus sanctified, I keep;
Daring the Thesmothetæ and their host
Of burden-bearers in their worst assault.”

“The oppressor skills not in the lore of life,
His grandeur is the sea-foam—and his power
The gossamer a zephyr bears away.
Beware thy answer, ’t is the very last

The desperation of the land allows.
Hast thou forgot Lenæa on the rack ?
She spat her gory tongue at thee, and died
Defying tyrants to make traitors, son
Of the destroyer of the chainless Right !
Aristogiton and brave Clisthenes
May teach thee wisdom ere thy Medon comes !”

“And I may teach it thee, unmannered slave
Of men, who, while they envy me, aspire
To gain the masterdom by fawns and smiles
Flung on the vile democracies of Greece !
The trusted may betray—the ruthless foe
Assail—and famine be my only guest—
Danger my only guard—despair, the pulse
That throbs me on to death—but I to none
Will render back my heritage ! away !”

“One word, proud Hippias ! thou may’st depart
With thine own Rhodope and all thy wealth,
To any realm thou wilt—but hear me, lord !
Aristogiton with Platæan troops
Leads on the squadrons of brave Clisthenes !
The Spartan and the Alcæonidæ
Are banded with Arcadia to o’erwhelm—”

“ And let them come ! it shall be joy, whate'er
The gods resolve, to dip my hand in hearts
That clove my brother's ! Did I rightly hear—
Aristogiton ? that thy place were his !
I would abscind a whole Olympiad
From being but to quench that thirst ! he slew
Hipparchus ! and he will be deified !
If ghosts are gods, my hand should make him one !
Away ! begone ! the citadel is mine ! ”

Slowly the herald, spurning the dust, retired
Unto the assembling host that through the gates
Poured o'er the city, while thronged galleys lay
In the Piræus, and the cries of wrath
From the Munychian fortress hastened on
The assaulters of the tyrant's citadel.
That night, festivities and liberal mirth,
Accustomed at the nation's gayest feast,
When all in Athens banqueted and sang,
Wanted their worshippers ; for human hearts,
Goaded and gashed by wanton tyranny,
Hurled their oppressions and oppressors forth,
And robed their wounds with justice ! every clime
Hath had its crowned and sceptred torturers,
Its diadems and dungeons—every clime

May have its armed avengers, if the mind
Feels its immortal majesty, and bathes
The brand of bondage with the monarch's tears.

The battle-cries—the rush—the trumpet's voice—
The glare of torchlight combat—the dismay
And triumph—dinted shields and shattered helmets—
And broken palisades, and trampled halls
Of desolated splendor—all are o'er !
Deserted in his peril by the shades
Of his past glory, Hippias, through the gloom
Of tangled wilds and shaggy caverns, groped
His lonely path to banishment—amidst
The forests, crags and torrents and defiles
Of his wronged country—on the toppling peak,
And in the voiceless grotto—danger—fear,
And hopelessness and hunger, breathing one,
One deep, remorseless passion, born of Hate
And Agony—Revenge ! Revenge for all !
With ravening thirst of vengeance, borne for years,
Through mountain gorges and o'er deserts fled
The banished Hippias to the eastern king.

Amidst the beauty and magnificence,
The pomp and perfumes of the Sophi's court

'The outcast tyrant bow'd, while satraps laid
Their foreheads in the dust and magi waved,
From golden censers, odors o'er the throne
Of Persia's King, in conquered Babylon.
The diamond diadem, the Tyrrhene robes
Girded by broidered zones of gems and gold.
The violet colored turbans thronging round
The sceptre that awed Asia, and the dread
Of the adoring crowd—o'er Hippias threw
No fear and veneration fitting herds
Who grovel through the gloom of vassalage,
To breathe a glory they can never share.
Might, majesty, the usages of kings,
Palace and temple, and the matchless mind
Of Greece had left the unsceptred wanderer now
No admiration of barbaric pomp.

“What wouldst thou, son of Pisistratus?” said
Royal Hystaspes.—“Refuge and Revenge!”
Replied the unfaltering prince.—“The first is thine.
In Susa, by Choaspes, or the bowers
Of fair Persopolis—or any dome
Of all our empire that hath held a king,
Till such time as the greatness of *our* cares
Permits us further to discourse of thine.

Thou shalt not lack our solace for the woes
Revolt hath stirred within thy bosom, Prince !
Nor our fit aid to wrest from rebel hordes
A ransom such as Babylon has paid
For treason and Zopyrus—when time serves.
Thou comest not alone ?”

“ My Rhodope.

For we are childless, is the only charm
That lingers round my desolated path.
Great sovereign of the Orient ! and she,
Worn by our perilled flight, awaits, in grief.
The edict of the monarch’s gracious will.”

“ O Mythra ! doth it come to this, at last ?
That a frail woman—like a summer cloud
Upon the desert, is the only shade
For the brave man in agony—the flower
That with its fragrant leaves shadows the brow
Which burns in Passion’s fever—that our pride
And pleasure and renown and majesty
Are vanities beneath her starlight smile !
Well, thou art happy, Hippias ! in thy love.
Choose from our regal mansions as thou wilt—
And Peace, like the cool fountain’s music, shed
Her gladness round thee till we meet again !”

When Freedom, phrenzied by the scorn and wrong
Of purple power, tears from the place of guilt
The Atlas of the crushed heart's agonies
The sceptre trembles in each monarch hand
O'er the glad earth—the brightest crown-gems fade,
And battled legions—mercenary hosts—
Are cast like avalanches, o'er the realm
That doubts the archangel sanctitude of kings.
So goodly sympathies expand, and crime
Becomes impolicy, and shedded blood
Lamented chance, and princely palaces
In other kingdoms shield the despot, cells
Of darkness in his own should carcerate.

Time is but thought; and o'er the ill or good,
It flies or lingers as their spirits will,
Soothing misfortune, or to nurtured hate,
Adding dark torrents of feigned injuries.
Years drearily meandered o'er the heart
Of Hippias amidst the loveliest bloom
And verdure of the lote and myrtle groves,
The Aurora and the vesper hymn of streams.
The chequered shadows of the Zagros hills,
The magic, love, romance and revelries
Of his own beautiful and glittering home.

Humiliation panted for revenge—
Shame summoned demon pride—lost powers called up
The faded apparitions of his hour
Of homage and dominion; and he sued
By starbeam and by sunlight, through the years
Of banishment, to satraps at his feasts,
And princes in their palaces to lead
The vast hosts of the east against the land
Where, tyrant once and traitor now, his soul
Exulted to inflict its hoarded wrath.
His head was hoary and his countenance
Trench'd o'er, and charr'd by evil thoughts, ere forth
The heralds of the Medes and Persians passed,
To bid Arcadia to the Persian bow.
And Hippias buried time, till one returned.
“Brings't thou the earth and water? fear they not?”
Astarte save me! I alone am left;
The Grecians hurled my fellows from the rocks
Into the abysses—saying ‘Take your fill!’”

Mocked thus, Darius paused not, but arrayed
His armies for the conquest, and the waves
Of the Euphrates heard the shouts and songs
Of thousands following thousands to the war.
The barbs of Araby and towered elephants

Bore dasky chieftains panoplied ; the waste
And mountain pass and plain with silken tents
And costliest pavilions, pillowed round,
Seemed an enchanted land ; and instruments
Of softest music breathed their harmonies
On the spread camp and scattered wanton march.
Emblazoned shields no blood had ever dimmed,
And mirrored helmets ne'er a sword had left
A hero's witness on — and garments soiled
By no wild combat or untented sleep,
Glittered and waved around the royal pomp.
Beside the monarch in the centre rode
The mover of this pageantry, and oft
The doubting mind of Hippias, as he cast
His troubled glances o'er the motley host,
Betrayed the fear that, like a thraldom brand,
Seared his proud heart ; yet dared he not arraign
The satrap's vaunted skill in high command.
So on they passed, and o'er the Ægean swept
The galleys of the Persian, and his bands,
Like Sundered glaciers, poured upon the plain
Of deathless Marathon, leaving behind
Dark solitudes of smouldering flame and gore.
There stood Miltiades, mid the armed hearts
Of Arcady, and in the bristling van

Of the Plataeans towered an aged form,
Unbroken by the harvest years of joy
And virtue ; and the same heroic eye
Watched the o'ercrowding foe, that erst, along
The hallowed blade flashed on the cloven heart
Of dead Hipparchus ; and the traitor's brow
Felt the pale shadows of the sepulchre,
As he beheld Aristogiton there !

Let me not feign a picture of that fight !
The sanctities of ages shroud its deeds.
It's name is glory, and the hero's fame,
Shrined in the pantheon of deathless thought !
It thrills the soul of childhood and inspires
The sage, the warrior, and the statesman, when
All other fields of triumph pass away !

The earth became a reservoir of blood,
And carnage loathed its banquet, ere the waves
Of war bore Hippias, crimsoned with the gore
Of his betrayed and groaning country, near
Its terrible avenger. " Art thou come,
Hoar tyrant traitor ! to invoke thy doom
From him who gashed thy brother's perjured heart ?
And heard Harmodius, in his torture, name

Thy parasites, his fellows in the death?
Come! let the trophy of my best days be
Thy head, upon the shield, that shall not save
Thy bosom—when thy country bids thee die!”

He grasped—he hurled him from his plunging steed—
And, linked like maddened scorpions they strove,
And on the earth struggled in the wild might
Of merciless and all-redeeming hate.
Aristogiton is above him now!
Strike for thy country! strike for human kind!
The sabre searched the tyrant’s vitals then!
Ha! the blood bubbles from the ruthless heart!
Again—one other blow for Liberty!
Why roll thine eye-balls, patriot? oh, the blade
Of Hippias, by his dying anguish driven
With all his living hate, is in thy heart!
The red streams mingle—the deep rattling voice
Of Death exults in this last wild Revenge,
And the low prayer of gratitude, and sigh
Of love flow from the stiffening lips that breathed
Their latest blessing on Arcadia’s realm.
And there, at eve, the searchers of the dead,
Locked breast to breast, and palled in darkened blood,
The tyrant and the avenging patriot found.

TO MY DAUGHTER GENEVIEVE.

Star of my being's early night !

Tender but most triumphant flower !

Frail form of dust and heavenly light !

Rainbow of storms that round me lower !
Of tested love the pledge renewed,

The milder luminary given

To guide me through earth's solitude,

To Love's own home of bliss in heaven !

Heiress of Fate ! thy soft blue eye

Throws o'er the earth its brightness now,
As sunlight gushes from the sky

In glory o'er the far hill's brow ;
And light from thine ethereal home

On every sinless moment lingers,
As hope, o'er happier days to come,
Thrills the heart's harp with viewless fingers.

For, from the fount of Godhead, thou,

A ray midst myriads wandering down.
Still wear'st upon that stainless brow
The seraph's pure and glorious crown :

Still--from thy Maker's bosom taken
To bear thy trial time below,
Like sunlight flowers, by winds unshaken,
The dews of heaven around thee glow.

Hours o'er thy placid spirit pass
Like forest streams that glide and sing,
When through the fresh and fragrant grass
Breathes the immortal soul of spring;
And through the realms of thy blest dreams,
Thy high mysterious thoughts of Time,
Heaven's watchers roam by Eden streams,
And hail thee, Love! in hymns sublime.

But these bright days will vanish, Love!
And thou wilt learn to weep o'er truth,
And with a saddened spirit prove
That bliss abides alone with youth.
Cares may corrode that lovely cheek,
And fears convulse that gentle heart,
And agonies, thou dar'st not speak,
Deepen as childhood's hours depart.

And thou, fair child ! as years descend
In darkness on thy desert track,
May'st tread thy path without a friend,
Gaze on through tears, through shadows back,
And sigh unheard by all who stood
Around thee on a happier day,
And struggle with the torrent flood,
That sweeps thy last pale hope away.

O'er the soft light of that blue eye
Clouds of wild gloom may quickly gather,
As, ere the sunburst of his sky
The tempest fell around thy father ;
And mid the world's blind wealth and pride,
The chill of crowds, life's restless stir,
Thou may'st unknown with grief abide.
Lone as the sea of Anadir.

And thou wilt grow in beauty, love !
While I am mouldering in the gloom,
And like the summer rill and grove,
Sigh a brief sorrow o'er my tomb ;
And thou wilt tread the same wild path
Of mirth and madness all have trod
Since time gave birth to sin and wrath—
Till from the dust thou soar to God !

Doubts may assail thy soul, and woes
Gather into a burning chain,
And round thy darkened spirit close
Mid loneliness, disease and pain,
When I no more can watch and guard
Thy daily steps, thy nightly rest,
Nor with the strength of sorrow, ward
Earth's evil from thy spotless breast.

Fed by the dust that gave thee breath,
Wild flowers may bloom above my grave.
And sigh in every night breeze, *Death*,
When thou shalt shriek for me to save !
The bosom, from whose fount thy lips
The nectar drew of bliss below,
May moulder in the soul's eclipse,
And leave thee to thy friendless woe.

Ambition's lures—the destinies
Proud passion shapes and calls them Fate's,
Far wilder billows than the sea's,
(Man but for evil power creates),
May cast between thy gentle love
And thy loved brother's high career—
A barrier like the Mount of Jove—
The parting of a hemisphere.

And wiles and snares and sorceries,
Will spread beneath thy feet, and stain
Thy spirit with their glittering lies,
Till phantom bliss doth end in pain;
And thou must feel and fear and hide
The doubts that gloom, the pangs that gnaw.
And o'er a wreck'd heart wear the pride,
That casts on guilt an angel awe.

Yet dread not thou, my Genevieve !
The ills allowed, allotted here—
Nor waste thy soul in thoughts that grieve—
The trembling sigh, the burning tear !
Mind builds its empire on the waste—
And virtue triumphs in despair—
The guiltless woe of being past
Is future glory's deathless heir.

Beware the soil of thoughts profane,
The fluent speech of skill'd design,
Passion that ends in nameless pain,
And fiction drawn from fashion's mine !
He, who so wildly shadows out
The darkest passions of our sin,
Draws the dark bane, he strews about.
From the deep fount of guilt within.

THE ANOINTED keep thee, sinless child!

Be on thy path, the PARACLETE!

Through dreary wold and desert wild

THE GIVER guide thy little feet!

Like buds that bloom as blown flowers fall,

New hopes wave o'er thee angel pinions,

Till thou, with them who loved thee—all—

Blend round the smile of God in glory's high dominions.



URN BURIAL.

Give not the human temple of the mind

To the dead loathsome dust of ages gone,

In the cold, silent, glimmering vault consign'd

To the dark sceptre of Death's ebon throne ;

Give not the quench'd and shattered shrine, whereon

Thought burned its incense, feeling breathed its prayer,

O'er which Hope, Faith, and Intellect have flown,

To the bleak, haunted darkness of despair—

Oblivion's utter gloom, where Love cannot repair.

Time rends the ties which frail Earth briefly gives,

And the soul's visions vanish like the wind,

But love immortal in its glory lives,

And in elysium links blest mind with mind ;

E'en now, wing'd angels, watching o'er their kind,
In parted beings old affection burns,
As, hovering o'er the haunts of thought enshrined,
To the heart's home, that, once lost, ne'er returns,
They wander gladly back and breathe upon their urns.

The seraph visitants, who dwelt in forms,
Redeemed by tears and hallowed by the grave,
Float o'er our thoughts in starlight and in storms,
And vainly languish for the love they gave;
While each loved bosom, to cold dust a slave,
Decays in darkness, and no eye looks down
Upon Earth's buried mysteries to save
The spirit's ark from sacrilege unknown,
Or bring affection back with the altar and the crown.

But there, pale tremblers o'er the prison tomb,
Where Death from each heart-thrilling feature springs,
The plumes of spirits quiver in the gloom,
And vain sighs murmur in their restless wings,
Uttering their deathless, doomed imaginings;
While life is stirring in the ardent veins
Of cheered survivors, and each daybreak brings
Fair gleams of hope and fresh Arcadian strains,
To gild the weeds of woe,—to hush Death's clanking chains.

Nourished in loneliness by beam and dew,
The azure waters and the emerald shore,
Light from the mind, like Gods from Ida, flew,
And breathed the immortal seraph's holiest lore;
And, from the world's corruptings, thought would soar,
When twilight taught religion, not of creeds,
Beyond the power of evil, and deplore
Frailties, o'er which the burning bosom bleeds,
And guilt, that casts deep night where'er it wildly leads.

Can this be Love's last refuge? this, the home
Of the heart's ardors and elysian charms?
To Death's cold mansion none of Time will come,
Where thou sit'st, Earth! thy dead ones in thine arms!
But shrinking fears and doubts and quick alarms
Pervade and agonize the soul, that shoots
Through the still dwelling, where no object warms
The frozen sea of memory, and the roots
Of Love decay, and leave sear trunk and blasted fruits.

But, oh, how beautiful the olden rite!
The twilight burial and the spicewood pyre!
The asbestos robe, the witnesses of light
From the blue heavens beholding son or sire
Bearing the dead with torch, and urn, and lyre!

Hope, memory, feeling, adoration dwelt
Within the mind, that purified by fire
The form, which, late, earth's sin and sorrow felt,
Yet kept the dust beloved and with it gently dealt.

Imagination, pathless and alone,
Went with a soundless tread through being's sky,
Bounding the infinite, naming the unknown,
And blending mortal with what could not die :
No voice, no vision, no revealing eye
Restored man's error in his maze of dreams,
But, solitary in creations high,
He gave immortal thoughts to woods and streams,
Bathed death's cheek in young dew and filled death's eye
with beams.

Thus, mounting to the fount of life divine,
The spirit revelled in its visionries,
Creating in each star a sacred shrine—
Having its home in the blue evening skies !
Man's hallowed love of beauty never dies,
But, born with being, gleams along the track
Of life, and, shadowing human destinies,
Revokes the evelights of glad childhood back,
And throws the rainbow's hues along the dark cloud's rack.

These lofty thoughts around the dead became
Soarings of tenderness, of Love that brought
Electric union of the deeds and name,
The flesh and the far being of the thought ;
High Intellect hath even shrunk from NOUGHT,
With loathing chill, and fashioned, at desire,
Worlds, where the fever, famine, ice, and drought,
Can slay no more—where friendship and the lyre
May hail, from ashes urned, the souls their songs inspire.

But who will weep when *I* shall be no more ?
Who to my manes offer life's regret !
The barque departs from being's desert shore—
The storm-veiled sun of saddened mind hath set !
Few are the hearts my wayward fate hath met
Which mine could fold as heaven unto my soul,
And these Earth shrouds or treachery's poison net :
And thus, alone, to Death's world-darkened goal,
Friendless, I haste and leave the orphans to their dole.

Dread not thy doom as mindless vassals fear
The tyrant's lash and torture, but, through all
The hours allotted to thy action here,
Thy deeds, as incense, rise above man's fall !
So wisdom redes : but man is feeling's thrall.

Shudders to part from gifts and blessings shrined
In his unfathomed soul, and, most, to call
In vain, along the boundless realms of mind,
For them who were his bliss mid thankless humankind.

In the grey dawn of Time, when high decrees
Were uttered by each bosom's pulse of pride,
When waters and dim woods had deities,
Oreads in the air and tritons on the tide,
And Nature's spirits o'er the heart did glide
Like most familiar friends—each thought and deed
Lifted exulting man, and purified
The stain and taint of crime, till all his creed
Was love to being's God and charity in need.

With what a passion, through all human things,
Frail hearts have panted in their pain to know
The mysteries that fold their midnight wings
Around the daring spirit ! but earth's woe,
Like the lone upas fountain's poison flow,
Utters alone the oracles that thrill
The soul, and, like the moaning ocean's glow,
Quiver along the waves of good and ill,
That rush towards the gulph where all is cold and still.

Inspired by grief, and guided by lone love.
The seers and sages of a better time
Gave beauty to the dead in every grove,
And household sanctity in every clime,
And fellowship and faith and hope sublime.
The deeds of years were, as Love's offering given.
To the dread manes of their sires, and crime
Fled from the Dead's Tribunal, wildly driven,—
Daring not souls on earth whose home and throne were
heaven.

Thus intellect and feeling gave to form
Undying action ; to the eye and brow
The shadows of divinity ; thus warm
From the deep fount came thoughts that lift us now
From earth, and wreath our hopes with heaven's own
bow !

Thus could our living meditations dwell
On doom, left fearless by the light and flow
Of life and hearthlight commune, Death's farewell
Might on the closing ear like songs of seraphs swell !

THE SACHEM'S CHANT.

The Mohican-hittuck* rolls grandly by,
Mid the bloom of the earth and the beam of the sky,
And its waters are blue and bright and blest
As the realms of the Red Man's god of rest,
And the gentle music, they leave along,
Is an echoed strain of the spirit's song.

The Mohican-hittuck glides softly on,
Like holy thoughts o'er the glorious gone,
And the sigh of the stream, through forests dim,
Blends with the wind in their twilight hymn,—
While the shadows are folding round rock and height.
And the dead are abroad on the wings of night.

The Mohican-hittuck sweeps darkly past,
Like the storm of death o'er the Red Man cast;
And the gathering tempest o'er earth and sky
Reveals our doom to the prophet's eye—
The exile's lot—the slave's despair—
The darkened sunbeam and poisoned air!

* The aboriginal name of the Hudson River.

The Mohican-hittuck's shore replied,
When its suns roamed free in their warrior pride,
To the harvest song, to the seedtime mirth,
And the bridal bliss on the blooming earth :—
We breathe not a beam of sun or star,
For dark is the brow of YOHÉWAH !

Where Mohican-hittuck mid isles careers,
And meets with a smile the salt Lake's tears,
The White Man's barque, like a windgod, hung,
And the pow wahs to welcome it danced and sung ;—
For the lands we gave to the stranger we reapt
Plague, poison and madness—and warriors wept !

The Mohican-hittuck—our own proud river—
The glorious gift of the Spirit giver,
Bears on its bosom the booty won
From the slaughtered chieftain's banished son,
And the paleface Sage, ere he meets his God,
Would mark with our blood the path he trod.

The Mohican-hittuck's hills have heard
The Indian's thoughts as his spirit stirred,
And, even now, thy waves grow dim,
River ! as awful memories swim,

Like the Wielder's bolts, on an autumn even,
O'er the billowy clouds of a wrathful heaven.

The Mohican-hittuck's secret dells
Feel the Indian's breath as it pants and swells,
And every wood on its banks returns
The shriek of the heart as it slowly burns !
The ghosts of my fathers like giants appear,
And the shades of the weak ones in sorrow and fear.

Oh, Mohican-hittuck—the wave of my birth !
The loveliest stream that laves the green earth !
ELOHA calls me and ROWAH replies—
I leave thee, blue stream ! for the wild mountain skies.
Yet fast as thy waves to the ocean advance,
Will thy bloom and thy gleam o'er my lone spirit glance.

Oh, Mohican-hittuck ! no more by thy stream
Shall the forms of the slain like icy lights gleam ;
No longer the voice from the bosom of glory
Gather grandeur and wisdom to learn their proud story.
Twice vanish the Nations from realms of the west,
And Vengeance shall start from the home of our rest !

WALTER COLEBROOKE.—A TALE.

High minded he was ever, and improvident,
But pitiful and generous to a fault—
Pleasure he loved, but honor was his idol.

LILLO.

During *his* better, and my childish days, when the voice of pure affection sounded in my soul like the music of paradise, none of those related to me by blood or marriage, inspired such love and admiration as Walter Colebrooke. His father, a genuine specimen of New England character, was a lineal descendant of the Pilgrims, who dared the danger of the ocean and suffered the privations of the wilderness to escape the ordeal of bigotry and the star-chamber judgments of political exaction, yet sullied the triumph of faith by their own relentless intolerance. Bred in the severe discipline of the Plymouth exiles, and devoted by the inculcated habits of many years to restriction and self-denial, he found himself the possessor of large domains and liberal influence, when Walter, his eldest son, shot up to manhood. But the habitual practice of economy had closed the avenues of his heart to open-handed benevolence, and his perpetual reply to applicants for charitable relief had long been with him a motto and an axiom: "none need to beg who are able to work, and the parish can support those who are not." Yet, with little aid from education, his mind was strong, clear-sighted and active: and where his prejudices did not counteract its better purposes, ample in its attachments and operations. They, who gain wealth by personal toil, are slow to extend their sympathies; what

they have done, it is too often taught, others may as easily do. Proud of the power their industry has created, they pause not to weigh the circumstances which have contributed to their success ; and hence the harsh and sudden decisions so frequently pronounced against the unfortunate. His nature was originally gifted with enlarged and deep affections ; the happiness of his family was always paramount even to his predominant passion of increase, and any exhibition of defective mental powers in his children excited in his mind the most vivid concern. Yet his vehement, and sometimes unreasoning temperament unfolded a universe of caprice, and his common self-control gave way before any real or imaginary attempt to govern or cajole him, like gossamer before the hurricane. In affairs of business, he scorned to be accused of what the world calls a good bargain ; and, while he never disgraced himself by seizing an advantage over the necessities or inexperience of others, his profoundest malediction followed any falsehood inflicted upon himself. Quick in thought and feeling, prompt and effective in action ; anxious to accumulate, yet detesting dishonour in all his enterprises ; easily irritated to the very wildness of indignation, yet placable to the slightest apology ; affable to his inferiors, but never familiar with his equals ; passionately devoted to the cause, religious or political, which he had once espoused, and incautiously disdainful of all opposed opinions ; the elder Colebrooke enjoyed in the township he inhabited, a preponderating influence and authority, which, in defiance of factious antagonists, his intellectual energies had secured and held with an unrelaxing grasp. Though he never suffered advice, yet his counsel was often requested : and, when homage was

thus rendered to his *pride*, his heart readily listened to the suggestions of *benevolence*. His strong virtues greatly exceeded all his faults ; his firm and consistent independence excluded any ignoble thought ; his knowledge of the world became the wisdom of the young and the guide of the enterprising ; many failed not to utter his name in love, and all conceded to his powers their faithful admiration.

The son of such a sire, it is not to be imagined that Walter should approach responsible manhood without exciting many anticipations in the hearts of marriageable maidens and sagacious disposers of dispensable incumbrances. Lofty and erect in stature, almost faultless in his proportions, of handsome and intelligent features, and, for his advantages, not displeasing in his address ; young Colebrooke added to his personal attractions, the certain prospect of a good establishment in a pleasant, populated and prolific country. His rivals beheld his approach with envy, and his departure with satisfaction ; none could assail his character for integrity and smalltalk, deny his fortune or his judgment in ribbons and trinkets, or impair his beauty and his knowledge of beauty in others by affected indifference or condemning approbation. The unmarried were sensible of his merits, for he adored their charms, and the matrons exulted in his wealth, for their resources were exhausted. Parties were given to one who had society enough without them, and festivals provided for him who needed not their gifts. The maimed and crippled soldier of the Revolution gazed from the poorest window of the poorhouse upon designing profusion, a moiety of which would have rendered his last days happy. The deceived and despised fair one beheld

from the deserted hut of her penury, her frail, though not fallen sisters, pursuing, under the presence of their mothers, the same race, which, with her, had so fatally ended. While his eye wandered without fixing on a hated object, Walter was the idol of all; each might be the chosen one, and, therefore, the whole artillery of female fascination was called into incessant action. The desired and intended consequences, however, were not apparent; for, shocked at the indelicacy which could solicit attachment, and the unequivocal invitation that anticipated a preference, Colebrooke retired from his previous gaiety, and returned protestations of friendship with chilling civility.

But, though offended propriety thus guided him free from the female snares around him, the infatuation of love soon plunged him into less retrievable disasters. Possessed, as he was, of envied attractions, high respectability of family and person, wealth, intelligence and manly grace, poor Walter, like many a wiser and greater man, deserted the highway of wisdom and happiness, and, by an uncalculated reliance on external charms, unaccompanied by discretion or industry, or individual excellence, sealed his miserable fate beyond the redemption of man. Not all the philosophers, divines, and system-makers on earth can give a rational explanation of the power of beauty. That a peculiar regularity of feature, transparency of skin and symmetry of form should atone for the absence of intellect—that mere animal loveliness (*imago imaginis*) should usurp the appointed place of mind, is a phenomenon insolvable by any demonstration in earthly mathematics. That fact in every age has discountenanced all theory on this inexplicable subject; that

the glance of vivacity or intrigue has ever disordered the calm eye of wisdom ; and that headlong youth has been, and ever will be misled by deceptive appearances, are positions sufficiently confirmed by bitter experience—and these truths are all we know.

In the midst of the still unslumbering agitations produced by the prospects and character of Walter—when many a wishful eye yet secretly watched his unguarded hours, and many a heart fluttered at the thought of even remote success,—he, unconscious of the destiny that hurried him on to destruction, beheld with a delighted eye—Elizabeth Forrester.

The only daughter of a country clergyman, who united to latitudinarian belief the indulgencies of a *bon vivant*, and the exemptions of a man of the world, she was disciplined according to her own propensities ; and bred up in an overweening idolatry, which magnified the manifestation of a virtue into confirmed and matchless excellence ; and she passed the rapid growth and energy of vice, not only unreprehended, but unobserved. Her education was committed to the guidance of destiny, and her morals to the instruction of a mother without mind, and a father without piety. I never saw a beauty unconscious of her flattered loveliness, nor an heiress insensible to the fascination of gold. Sentimental inventors of character and creators of opinions may picture the indwellers of their utopias as they will, but real life presents no faultless monster—no prodigy of perfection ; fiction may indulge its dreams, but truth must dwell with reality. The rouge-and-pearl face of Elizabeth, in her own eyes, and those of her deluded parents, was an authentic passport to fame and fortune—a living, breathing, irresistible

Iris of light and glory. She was exhibited, even in her childish days, and lauded by luxurious deacons, soft-eyed elders and spotless ministers of truth—and after-dinner spirituous tribulation—till repeated praises palled upon her inordinate appetite, and the English vocabulary supplied no new appellations of sickening endearment to soothe her fretted humor or pacify her rage at petty disappointment. She was forbidden to exercise for health, lest a change of temperature should diminish her graces, though she seldom recovered her lacerated laces from the boughs of trees or the depth of ditches, where she had rivalled the rudeness of vagabond urchins, and exceeded even the perverse pauper-boy in his capacity of mischief. All necessary knowledge of household duties was interdicted, by the fear that her delicacy of complexion might be affected by the heat and exhalations of the kitchen. Any requisite system of study implied constraint and some positive exertion of the intellectual faculties; and the roses of her full fair cheek might fade over the detested volume, and her large black slumbering eyes grow dim over dusty and useless lore. Nature was her counsellor, guide, friend and instructor; all that issued from that holy fountain, must be pure—every gleam of that sun must be brightness. The spontaneous vegetation of the natural world was ever luxuriant, and even weeds illustrated the richness of the soil; so, her thoughts were left to her own cultivation, and her passions permitted to tyrannize over her without opposition. Thus she grew up with a consummate knowledge of her own desires, a thorough conviction of her own irresistible beauty and its contemplated consequences, and a finished recklessness of her own honor while her ambition was gratified; and

that of her family, so that her frailty was undiscovered. The tyrant and slave of her own will, the rules of her actions were expediency and probable success, their motives, the temporary pleasure which springs from the infringement of propriety and morals, and their effects, her own degradation and despair and the ruin of all allied to her fate.

That disregard of all opinions, upon which she acted, was readily mistaken by Colebrooke, during his first interview, for a generous frankness of disposition; her freedom of manner and expression resulted, he did not doubt, from abhorrence of hypocrisy: and the visible reluctance she displayed to engage on any topic of rational conversation, might justly flow from modest distrust and dread of exhibition; so easily are our vices believed to be our virtues, our unregulated passions, the best principles of the heart, our ignorance, the retiring bashfulness of enlarged information, and the utter want of most of the good qualities of human beings, the certain means of bending the knowledge and virtues of another to our own purposes.

The fiery arrows of love penetrated the heart of poor Walter, and through the secret mansions of that mysterious world scattered their rapid splendor. With a vivid, streaming, aurora light, they flew from thought to thought, quivered and shot along the electric chain of the highest and most engrossing passion of the spirit. Deep-felt affection, acting upon an undisguised and impetuous temperament, on the one side, and an indelicate scheming ambition of affluent wedlock on the other, interposed few impediments to a sudden and irrevocable declaration. Betrothed and blessed by the reverend father of Elizabeth.

whose insidious and unslumbering ambition would be accomplished by the union of Colebrooke's wealth with his ministerial power; the hearts of both the lovers glowed with joy, though the sources of their emotions were as far asunder as the nadir and the zenith. Passionately attached himself, Walter could not fail to attribute the same degree of affection to his companion, while she was less delighted at the triumphs of any feelings of the heart than the undelayed accomplishment of her interested designs. Still, even yet, he might retract his faith and leave her to the scorn of educated girls who had nothing better to boast of than antiquated virtue and vulgar information in literature and domestic avocations; therefore, she continued to disguise her various capabilities and inheritances beneath the mask of mildness, modesty and unambitious happiness.

The lovers were wandering, at twilight, along the banks of one of those nameless, gleaming and lonely rivulets which diversify, like gems of the wilderness, the picturesque and inspiring scenery of our land. The mind of Colebrooke glowed with deep, earnest, hallowed thoughts; and filled with the spirit of young love, he poured forth the passion of his soul.

"Look, Elizabeth!" said he, "the clouds are burning in adoration around the altar of the sun, and the waters are sending up the music of their evening hymn. How gloriously this sunset light glances upon the autumnal woods and seems to breathe around their dying hour the hope of their rural greenness. How beautifully the reflected radiance falls upon those many colored leaves—as the sunbeams of the enamored heart illumine the thousand objects of life! Is it not thus, Elizabeth, that love elevates

and beautifies every idea and emotion, and raises us above the low conflicts and animosities of existence?"

"Yes!" she replied in affected abstraction, "yes, I think as you do, Walter." "And see," he continued, "the rose-hues are fading now and dusky grey pervades the path of that late glory; but, to atone for this sudden dimness, the stars are coming forth in the depths and the crescent hangs in the western heavens, like the saint's trust in God around the fainting and dying heart."

"Indeed 'tis very delicate and pretty—but, it is getting damp and chill." Colebrooke made no reply; his mind was too much excited to allow any outward inconvenience, even had it existed, to affect his higher thoughts; but, attributing Elizabeth's want of participation in his feelings to what is called, enigmatically, indisposition, he turned and retraced his way to the parsonage, still unsuspectingly discoursing on the loveliness of the scenery, the majesty of nature and the sublime conceptions which the works of Providence inspire. Elizabeth, meanwhile, exulting in her adroit deception and management, smiled in her secret soul at the pedantic display, the puritanical feelings, and romantic sentiments of her doomed lover, resolving that marriage should eradicate all thought, feeling, enterprise and enjoyment, except that which contributed to her personal pleasure. The hour of such a doom was not remote. I cannot pause to delineate the details—the minutiae of an illusion which was destined to dissolve, like every human anticipation, in storms and tears. Love owns no responsibility to reason or the fitness of things; excited passion, determined to enjoy its object, is as unprepared to listen to remonstrance as is the observer to describe its hurried operations. He who

toils under intense agitation, is unfitted to compare and analyze the feelings which have dominion over him: he cannot number the deadly throbs of a heart that almost suffocates; he cannot reckon the strokes of the death-bell! It is only when grief, ambition, love or pleasure is past that it can be described as it has been felt; when satiety succeeds the drugged and destroying bowl, the terror, involved in its power, may be pictured to the mind; when safety follows peril, the mind is free to unfold the doubts and agonies of the torture.

Courtship ended and marriage was consummated. The elder Colebrooke was a man of sterling sense and extensive reach of thought; he cherished no idle ambition of isolated grandeur, exclusive prerogative and personal aristocracy.—He remembered well the wants, the wastings, the convulsions of the Revolution, and was well assured that all constitutions and edicts were vain, if once Liberty were invaded by marked and impassable distinctions. Resolved that, instead of living as worthless profligates, as fools or knaves, on the patient accumulations of his industry, his sons should *deserve* prosperity by active occupations; he desired no more, when Walter asked his consent to his nuptials, than an assurance of mutual affection and a promise of steady industry. The old gentleman seemed happy in the contemplation of loveliness which would have fascinated his youthful imagination; and, amid his sanguine felicitations, found himself unable to reprove the precipitancy of his son's marriage, though Walter had not attained his twentieth year, and his suit had terminated in two months. Amidst the hilarious festivities of that celebration—even the commonplace occurrences of feeding and excitation—salutation of rosy lips

that breathed melody and bliss and the sincere but vain prognostications of future joy which were uttered over the brimming goblet—no ascetic could indulge morose forebodings or even involuntary despondency. The exhilarated spirits of the assembled youth rose and fell like the moonlight sea when the rapid tides are waves of light, upon the elder portion of the throng, as they stood in groups contemplating the varied amusements, and imparted to the gravity and thoughtfulness of age a glimpse of the rapture felt in the Eden hours of being. Each father of the settlement summoned back the well remembered time when his hope was as bright, his memory as beautiful and his ecstacy as thrilling as those of the reckless youth who laughed and danced before him now; and, if he could not participate in pleasures which his stern experience had shown to be not only evanescent and unsatisfactory in their being, but attended by exhaustion and followed by disrelish of all ordinary happiness, he checked not the overflow of genial natures nor personated the prophet of evil, to fallible creatures whose fortune must abound with trial. The ancients of the humble village which is the scene of this true tale, were no believers in that bigoted austerity of manner which conceals, for a time, the corruptions and corrosions of vice, and imparts, beneath the shadows of hypocrisy, a transitory sanctity to the persons and names of the profligate. Their *meetinghouse* creed was stern, unchangeable and merciless; but the intercourse of general society was modified and mellowed by purer and loftier humanities than are, commonly, promulgated from the pulpit. They believed that cheerful recreation was better than damning intolerance; that the God of Mercy was not to be adored amidst the

ashes of human sacrifice ; that the smile of Aglaia was holier than the frown of Jove ; that consistent and habitual benevolence was more acceptable than a thousand holocausts. In the far depth of the vale of time, when all their departed opinions, perhaps tainted by malevolence, and all their bitter thoughts, urged relentlessly against less powerful but more blameless minds, stood, like panoplied giants, upon the hills around to warn them of past error, they were too sadly assured that mercy wins more than justice compels, that revenge is baffled where forgiveness triumphs, and that, as Love is the consolation of death, so remorse—the Tantalus of the heart—is the eternal penalty of the un pitying sectarian.

In the vigor of his frame and the brightness of his days, young Colebrooke entered as master the ample and prolific possessions bestowed by his father ; and, for a time, enjoyed with his beautiful bride that surpassing happiness which, in its transient glimpses, reveals to us imaginations of that bright, pure and unending bliss assured to the good in a happier world. A hallowed and delicious romance—the sacred fervor of an untainted heart, which has known little of the anxieties, degradations, and indignities of the world—its vassal arrogance—its consuming obloquy—its wasting cares and apathy and despair—insinuated itself into every daily and hourly event. To a superficial and uninterested observer, there was much to admire in Elizabeth ; nature had not been niggard in original capacities of learning and excellence ; in the gayest and least generous communities she would not have passed without ardent praise. Add to this, that Walter loved her with a fidelity and profoundness of feeling scarcely within the comprehension of the world, and the source of his present rapture will be visible to all who have united quickness of thought with beneficence of heart, and purity with expansion of intellect.

The venerable and ample dwelling of the elder Colebrooke stood upon the summit of Koyshill—a commanding eminence amidst a land of mountains; that of his son Walter was situated in the centre of a rich meadowland, some miles to the south of the little, idle, busy, bustling and unprofitable village of Western, where the great mass of idea and sympathy was generously bestowed upon the concerns of the well-guarded individuals, and no one lacked his portion of judicious moral scrutiny. Mark's precipitous and rugged mountain and the meandering river Chicapee intervened; and, many a time, when I have been despatched on messages from sire to son, have I climbed the jagged rocks and gazed, with thrilling anticipations, over the distant hills and valleys which lay between me and the knowledge for which my spirit panted, burned and agonized. Many a time have I daringly leapt from rock to rock across the rapid and tumultuous channels of my native stream, and thought I would confront direr dangers in the world for a less reward than nature gave me. With loneliness comes reflection, and, with that, knowledge of our powers, but misfortune alone can teach us to use them rightly in the achievements of ambition. From his new abode Walter could contemplate diversified and enchanting scenery. The sterility of his mountain woodlands was pleasantly contrasted by the vivid verdure and generous harvests of his cornfields and pastures; his house was furnished in a style superior to his rank; his farm-yard presented noble and fatted flocks—those domestic animals which so strongly remind us of home and comfort—and the very first season of his independent cultivation gladdened his toil by sevenfold fruits.

The birth of a son seemed to confirm his happiness; so surely does that, which appears the consummation of bliss, eventuate in the darkness of desolation. Liberal and affectionate to no ordinary degree, he had always attributed

Elizabeth's reluctance to discharge household duties to the lassitude of an invalid, not the careless indolence of an unprincipled woman; and he had provided, at an expense scarcely known during that and indeed the present period of New England toil, privation and simplicity, domestics, not only to relieve her from exertion, but to direct the affairs of the family. His engrossed and fervent affection permitted him not to see that what he considered illness was incapacity and disinclination, and that the festival profusion and personal extravagance in which his wife indulged, were little calculated to win the regard of the wise or determine the respect of those who looked not to the outward form alone. Still less, these inauspicious displays contributed to his worldly prosperity and private peace. Mrs. Colebrooke was too refined to desire or permit the presence of her husband, heated and covered with the dust of the field, in the vicinity of her fashionable assemblies; and he, whose daily labor was thus uselessly expended, failed to share in the festivities of the gay, though he commanded the admiration and respect of the wise. Walter knew that he had received his share of his father's wealth, and he well knew too, that his existing habits of expense would more than exhaust all the profits of his unceasing labor; but he would not suffer his knowledge to dwell upon circumstances which reflected the slightest reproach upon his adored Elizabeth. In that hour so memorable and sacred to a parent, when his first born child was presented to him, and his thrilled though unprophetic heart glowed with the ineffable conviction that he was a father—perhaps, the progenitor of a famed and honored race—the youthful ancestor of a gifted and powerful people, who would shrine his name in the temple of their worship and revere his memory as the palladium of their rights—he almost accused himself, amidst his deep happiness, of serious crime in permitting a suspicion of Elizabeth's match-

less excellence to invade his better mind. His generous and delighted spirit suggested many apologies and palliations for apparent neglect and costly vanity ; “ she had been bred in extreme indulgence ; she had been unrestrained in her tastes, dispositions and propensities : She had been among the young without a rival, and the aged had called her their idol. Time would change her inclinations, allay the uncalculating exuberance of feeling, and, through the imperative duties of a mother, lead her to forego the dissipations of general society for the infantile fascinations of domestic life. Her child would be alike her ambition and her bliss. The tender sanctities, which her new relations involved, would crown her utmost desire of distinction and consummate the best hopes which *his* sanguine nature had indulged.”

Thus reasoned the slave and victim of a vain hope—the deceived, the self-deceived sacrifice of infamy and guilt. He trusted in treachery, he cast his naked heart upon the altar of shame—he offered up his highest and holiest thoughts to a devouring crocodile. Passion became his aliment ; he feasted on luxurious poison ; he dissolved the priceless pearl of his soul, and discovered not, till too late, that it was the condensed venom of asps. No devotion to her feelings, no abandonment of his desires was too great ; he left his cares to hirelings, and took upon himself the office of a servant to her humors. He became the very menial of love—the bondslave of engrossed and engulfed affection—he resigned himself, a sacrifice to the hydra of the heart, and the serpent luxuriated in his voiceless agonies.

The proverbial love of a mother is not without its exceptions ; vanity, shame, audacious pride and unhallowed desire are all, not seldom, predominant over that pure and sublime passion of the female heart. No faith can be reposed in emotions which expire in their birthhour, no happiness issue from the polluted fane where sacrilege despoils and

profanity teaches the doctrines of destruction. Born of feeling, Love should be confirmed and perpetuated by principle; or, like Gama off the Cape of Storms, it floats upon an unknown and perilous ocean, swept far from its path by the tempest of the burning zone, broken by the wave and confronted with death. The child was given to a nurse—the housekeeper fulfilled the duties of a mistress, and with the bitter sweat of Walter's brow, the afflicted Mrs. Colebrooke purchased her gorgeous habiliments and pampered her distempered appetites. Filth and finery went hand in hand; provisions were bought when they should have been preserved; the rewards of patient and unremitting toil would not satisfy the demands of insatiable extravagance and hopeless inaction; and, miserable beyond all language, poor Colebrooke went, sleepless and exhausted, to the crushing bondage of his despair.

His family increased as years of sorrow and growing embarrassment accumulated upon his miserable heart, and his utmost enterprise could not, in the least, retrieve the perplexities and disasters which were gathering around him.—Walter had a godlike spirit, and he provided for all who composed his household with a liberality and even profusion more illustrative of his magnanimous disposition than merited by his unworthy associate or consistent with his suffering income. But the very fiend of riot and recklessness reigned in his devoted dwelling; waste scattered in the dust the spoils of wanton excess; enjoyment fled from luxury in the house, and habitual melancholy settled in cimmerian gloom upon the discouraged cultivator of beautiful lands which soon might pass from his possession. His lares had taken up arms against him—his sacred hearthstone no longer yielded him a refuge from care or pleasure in retrospect or hope in future days. He found no solace in summer evening conversations with one who perpetually harassed his

wearied mind by some fresh invented scheme of individual expense—some fretful complaint or imaginary want. O the awful power of woman! She can clothe the world with brightness, beauty and bliss—she can pour the light of heaven, the sunbeams of seraphic thought and immaculate virtue over the heart of her husband—or she can darken the hopeless earth even to the very blackness of desolation and banish to the midnight depths of pain and sorrow the noblest mind and most generous feelings that ever glowed in man! She can lift the sordid soul and purify its grovelling purposes; and she can cover with the ashes of agony and shame the brightest reputation and most sublime intelligence. She can feed daring ambition with the ambrosia of the gods; and she can change the conquering struggle after distinction into the prometheus pangs of undying death. Like the seraph of the sun, she may guide to regions of glory and illustrate and beautify scenes of splendor or softness, of rapture or apprehension, of tempest or repose; and like Eblis, in the haunted depths of pandemonium, she may mock the anguish her own malignity has inflicted and smile at the despair with which she has filled the trusting bosom she betrayed. Life has no joy like her gentle and holy love, nor dissolution a pang like her worthlessness; earth has no purity like her consecrated heart, and hell no bitterness like the blighting curse of her abandonment.

Seasons brought no change—time seemed only to confirm a perpetuity of evil. The absorbed and concentrated selflove, which had embittered the unblest life of her husband, now cast away her children. Devoted to utter neglect, they gambolled with the swine and wallowed in the sandbank and waded through the mire of the marsh without reproof or remark of hers. While her assemblies of talkative consumers and her daily slumbers were undisturbed, what availed it that the health of her sons was wasted

by exposure, their morals suffering from servile and profane companionship, and the property of her husband disappearing with weekly purchased suits which were neither changed nor repaired till worn to tatters. They imitated the example of her who slept, and nursed, and searched the rocky woods, in silks! The little opportune labor, that saves what a few days might ruin, was unthought of there; the servants could wear the soiled and rended garments which none but vulgar people would patch and dye and mend!—Colebrooke beheld his wretched children in their wild sports, and bade them return to his house; but his seed must be sown—his harvest must be gathered, his cattle fed, his flocks recovered and his produce sold. He could not be everywhere at once—and none obeyed the husband whose counsels and commands his own wife disregarded. So the ungoverned boys roasted by the roadside in their rags, while Walter fainted in the field; and cried aloud for new dresses, when he rested at his door. The merchant and dandy-creator of the village seemed to have inspired the wife and children with the mania of destruction; and the miserable father, fearing that others should perceive his embarrassments, departed to purchase the robes of ruin. These things, however, did not occur without many remonstrances on his part, and many insidious replies on hers. The last attempt to close the floodgates of misery, to recover his lost property—was made on a tempestuous and lonely winter evening. Walter had been occupied in a rigid and melancholy examination of his accounts for more than an hour; he raised his head, with a sigh, looked mournfully at Elizabeth and said: “These papers are the prophets of evil, Elizabeth! My soul sickens, my heart trembles to comprehend the extent of my responsibilities. Years have passed since I contracted credit with these men, and I have not dared nor they deemed it politic to ask an examination. Now I dread to realize the

truth—I shrink from the conviction of my helplessness and their demanded rights—all I possess on earth cannot liberate me from my accountabilities. Alas, Elizabeth, I did not think we should come to this. I was well established and had a right to look forward to lengthened years made honorable by accomplished purposes, independent by prudence and blessed by consistent kindliness of feeling;—what have I left?” “Surely, my dear Walter, you will not forget the wife of your bosom, to whom you plighted your enduring affection when she preferred your love to that of many? The difficulties, of which you complain, may be remedied—Your industry, I am certain, will meet all our expenditures—your character will demand credit. You would not that your wife should shrink from competition with her equals—that our children should fear to stand up boldly in the presence of the loftiest.—Give not way, dear Walter, to this despondency! all will be well.—The season has not been fruitful; another will redeem you from anxiety; it grows late, my love,—you will not watch in this fatigue.”

“I have been taught to bear and suffer, Elizabeth, and I can watch. This life was once to me a scene of uninvaded enjoyment; I had ampler purses than my necessities or luxuries required; I was respected by the good and solicited by the gay; Time floated by in music, and sinless pleasure renewed its daily charms. But that is passed—and, with the death of my dreams, comes the wretchedness of living doubt. I am haunted by apprehension and plunged into the very pit of perplexity. With our present expenses there is no hope of retaining what we have—much less of acquiring more.”

“My dearest Walter!” replied the artful wife, “such causeless despondency dishonors your good sense and judgment; our means are not soon exhausted; pleasure con-

sists with fortune, and what is better beneath the sun than to use the goods the gods provide?

“Use should not become abuse,” said Colebrooke. “True joy follows truth, fidelity, considerate love and uncomplaining application; and the blessing of God rests only on those who forsake not their own interests while they confide in his providence.”

“Your sentiments are just like my father’s. Walter, and your faith, like his, will have its reward. Birth, death, marriage and pulpit oratory were all the same to him; he melted every heart by his prayers—and expended his fee in a feast; he charmed the whole town by his eloquence—and scorned to pamper the lazy profligacy of a beggar who complained of fire and famine; he heightened the bliss of wedlock by the significant brevity of his ceremony, and always took the *lady’s part* in divorce. Put your trust in Heaven, like him, and all will be well.”

“Nothing will ever be well or even endurable with me while this scene of unprofitable extravagance continues.—Our mad waste must expire or our past affluence must vanish. I feel no disposition to enact the tyrant’s part, whether he be priest or demagogue, even if such despotism and avarice could save my soul. I will not say—for I love you better than my own spirit of life—that you must retrench both our paid and credited purchases—but I implore you, Elizabeth, as you prize our future respectability and the happiness of our children, to weigh well the consequences of worldly vanity and personal thoughtlessness. This system cannot last; we shall be outcasts and our sons and daughters—mendicants!”

“Come, my love!” said Elizabeth, throwing her beautiful arms around his neck and caressing him with a smile and kiss, which could win when it willed; “the wind moans

dismally without, the lamp grows dim and the fire burns low; the dreary storm infects your spirits, love! Dismiss your distresses in repose—nay—nay, never gaze upon those hateful bills—taxes imposed on pleasure—let me deposit them in your cabinet. Now, love, we will forget these troublesome things, and seek in affection and reliance on Providence a solace and charm which nothing can destroy.”

Poor Colebrooke resigned himself to his terrible assailant; in her fearful embraces he forgot his duty, his responsibilities, his pride, honesty and manhood; all, even yet, seemed trivial when contrasted with his exhaustless burning passion. At the summons of her syren voice, he forsook his high ambition, his independent principles, his earthly and heavenly hopes. He laid down the proud and countless thoughts of a gifted, though undetermined mind, beneath the altar of a voluptuous Calypso; and, amidst the fascinations of her charms, fell into oblivion of all trouble, terror and approaching desolation. The madness of the heart had seized upon his brain and irremediable misery sprung from the phantom bowers of his delirium.

On the following day, he harnessed his heavy team, and broke through the deep drifts of snow to gather his winter fuel; for, as his money had been devoted to other purposes than the full payment of his laborers, but one remained to help him in his need. The morning was cold as ingratitude; his thick winter overcoat, Elizabeth said, was beyond repairs; his gloves were in the same condition; and every vestige of a stocking had disappeared among the unsearchable lumber of the garret. So Walter drew on his coarse boots, buttoned his worn coat, and went forth without a murmur. His feet and hands were frozen when he returned, but he had brought wood to kindle a cheerful fire for Elizabeth; his constitution was laid open to disease, but she could dwell in comfort. His sufferings were the foun-

tain of her enjoyment, and he wished to forget them. Oh, what honor, prosperity and happiness might have accompanied that ill-fated family, and shed a glory and a benison upon the venerable head of Colebrooke, had the wife shared a moiety of the magnanimity, generous sacrifice and exalted principle of the husband. But he was misled by a meteor in his early days—he was too proud to confess his error till repentance was too late, and he loved with a blinded and manacled madness which permitted him not to exact obedience to his commands, while ruin was coming on him like a giant armed.

There was nothing in that doomed house (it rises before me now as it was often seen in the troubled, but still pleasant hours of my childhood) to relieve the monotony of suffering; no love of literature to soften, if not efface remembrance of sorrow and elevate the mind beyond the agitations of present misery; no indestructible emanations of congenial and sympathetic hearts to mellow and purify the afflictions they were condemned to feel; and, most of all, no religion to teach the worn and wasted spirit that its best hopes repose in worlds no form of flesh can enter. In his youth, Walter had respected without professing to practise piety; he had never failed in reverent attention to the church, its minister and its ordinances; but had steadfastly refused to sanction revivals which were *not* reformatations, and partake of the eucharist when unprepared to fulfil the many momentous duties it involves. For Elizabeth, she was the daughter of a clergyman, and too thoroughly familiarised with the artifices and secret objects of a misdirected and abused profession to indulge any creed but that of her own gratification. She knew that splendid declamation could consist with hollow hypocrisy, that austere manners could mask libertine indulgences, that earnest exhortations to repentance and menaces of the wrath of God could flow from lips

which were polluted by profanity and unbelief; and, knowing this, without appreciating better examples, she little respected the ordinances or the faith of which her father was the officiator and the head. A chill discomfort pervaded the dwelling of Walter Colebrooke; the costly furniture was soiled or broken; economy, active employment and self-denial had taken their eternal flight; window panes lay shattered on the floor of the parlor, and no one removed them or supplied their place; want invaded those days not devoted to festivity, when means of excess were procured by usury; and the mournful winds of heaven sighed over the wreck of one who might have mingled with the proudest, and stood up with the best. Desolation had set his seal on the dreadful record of conjugal profligacy; and self-desertion soon followed the footsteps of imbecile submission to attractive deceit, which might have been arrested on its road to death.

Large debts, which had been suffered to accumulate, at first without fear, and subsequently from dread of examination, gradually swelled, as years went on, into heavy sums, which Colebrooke dared not to hope he should ever be able to discharge. Convinced that he was now completely in their power, his creditors demanded a mortgage of all his lands; and he walked no more in the pride of independent possessions. But, though evil habits were stealing through the avenues of sorrow to prey upon his unhappy bosom, yet he bore stoutly up against the torrent of misfortune, and trusted still to escape outcast wretchedness. His ample forests towered grandly as ever; his fields were cultivated with the same diligence which had characterised his previous industry; his yellow harvests presented their wonted offerings; and all admired the noble spirit which he displayed in the very arena of conflict and hopelessness.

But the last crash of the warning thunder now echoed along the gloomy clouds of the mind—the last flash of the

lightning bolt glanced in the depth of the darkness to display the ruin which was soon to be buried in the bosom of midnight. The fatal revenge of a woman, who had been a frequent habitant in his family during past years, whom Elizabeth, in the confidence of security and the fearlessness of a doomed hour, had lately driven from her house with reproach, now revealed to the humbled and agitated Colebrooke the maidenly dishonor of her who had so long slumbered on his bosom. Secrecy had hung over the intrigue, the knowledge of which had been obtained by this bribed and threatening woman; and, though the offender knew that her guilt was only concealed, not forgotten, yet, rather than bear the severe exactions which were demanded from her patience and her purse, she chose to encounter the full vengeance of her late accomplice and present adversary. She trusted in the force of her unchangeable denial of the truth of the woman's assertions. She confided without the remotest apprehension, in the strength of that deep, confirmed and habitual love which, she knew, reigned in the breast of her husband. But the exasperated informant was armed with terrible reproof; she seized and condensed to the essence of adder's venom every circumstance, every incident, every word which could bear conviction and despairing assurance to the ardent and abused nature of Colebrooke. There was no distrust—there could be no doubt of the deed. Her long absence from home, during the year preceding her marriage, without any assigned or comprehensible cause, her clandestine attachment to a young profligate named Dalcho, who had disappeared after frequent solitary interviews, and left no trace of his existence behind him except in Miss Forrester's disgrace: her visible reluctance to hear his name, or even an allusion to her unexplained residence for six months at a remote farmhouse, where she had neither friend nor acquaintance; all these circumstances, combined with direct assertions of her distracted and im-

ploring confessions of guilt, fell upon the tumultuous mind of Walter like a livid mass of lightnings. His love had brought domestic unhappiness, and worldly ruin, and violated chastity into his household and his bed. Protestations and curses and convulsions followed the disclosure—but he saw the awful truth and fell to the dust, a hopeless man! In life there was no more ambition, or joy, or peace, or hope for him. His vain dreams of respect and enjoyment fled like the morning dew; the names, once electric, of husband and father, fell upon his ear like ice-bolts; he shrunk from all and wandered forth to pray that death would be his last best friend. No bitter and blighting execrations passed his lips—for they were useless now; no loud lamentations betrayed the agony which scorched and consumed him—they could not change his doom; but an unalterable apathy—an utter heedlessness of every living thing—a *congealment of the lava of his burning passion* fell upon his wrecked and crucified affections. The nectar of his bliss had turned to poison; the tree of knowledge had borne the fruit of death; no avenue of escape was left open—no object to accomplish—no aim to guide him. He had his frailty, for he feared the world; he dreaded even while he scorned the scorner: he had garnered up his harvest of delight for the feast of the lightning; he had scattered the seeds of his love upon ground that changed its nutriment to ashes; he watched the cold, malign and withering world with an eye that defied while it condemned its worthlessness, its audacity, its magnificence and insane ambition. He grasped the brimming goblet of perdition, he consumed his noble faculties and his wrongs together, and went forth among mankind a monument of living death. Make a man unhappy in his home, worry and irritate him by endless reiterations of trivial necessities, desires and caprices, invent disasters when none occur to agitate his mind, chain his

soul to the cradle and cause his most momentous duties to consist in ready submission to the requirements of wife and children—involve him in debt and then aggravate his apprehensions by agonizing forebodings—and you banish him from hope, destine him to misery and drive him to the revel of forgetfulness. When one's own house is his hell, who can dwell therein? When one's own partner is his persecutor, who can abide her presence?

Walter had resolved to die. Earth contained no hope for him. In the solitary field he thought upon his unprovided children and wept aloud as one not to be comforted; he thought upon their dishonored and faithless mother, and his tears fell back in their fountain. Yet his lips breathed no accusation and his accents betrayed no harshness. After the first bewildering blow, nothing could excite or interest him more. On Sabbaths and holydays he observed no longer the commendable custom, so general in New-England, of dress and decoration; he laid down upon his vile couch in the garret and replied to no one; he swallowed the contents of the fatal bowl and silently refused to sit longer at his generous board. Elizabeth was now assured, for the first time in her life, that the power of her beauty had departed. Had her husband overwhelmed her with wrath and violence—had he denounced her crime and hypocrisy by the most terrible maledictions—she would have sustained them all without fear of the ultimate restoration of her dominion; maddened and merciless passion would have exhausted its energies, and in the pauses of the tempest, her voice might yet prevail. But now she sank under the certainty that all was lost; his answers were abbreviated to a single word, and he uttered no remark—he did not seem to see the objects around him nor indicate existence except by breath. Reckless of every thing, his presence restored order no more in farmyard or

dwelling; his implements of husbandry lay rusted or broken by the roadside or furrow; his walls decayed and no one replaced them; the torrent rains of autumn poured through the rotten roof of his granaries, and his cattle looked wistfully for their provident master to fill their garners as in better days; his faithless mercenaries idled amidst his cornfields, and he passed them by without word or look. Misery was in his heart and intoxication in his brain, and his fine form bowed beneath the burden of his bosom. His broad brow was harrowed by despair; his beautiful eyes contracted and displayed the ravages of the fluid pestilence; and his commanding features, once so eminent in their beauty and intellect, now bloated by excess and discolored by the fiery liquid, lost all expression of mind, of pleasure, of participation in any thing that occupies and agitates the world. Wild mirth sometimes convulsed them, but it was the laughter of the sepulchre; quick flashes of wit illumed them, but they were the meteors of destruction. His father prayed for his death-hour, and his mother sighed over hoarded remembrances of her firstborn, her earliest delight, her most beloved and lamented.

It was midsummer; the blinding light and intense heat of the day had given place to a breezeless, sultry but starlight evening. It was the night of the sacrament Sabbath—but Walter had not mingled with the worshipping society nor listened to any discourse but that of his own misfortune. Late in the afternoon his father had visited him, and they had gone forth together. The topics and result of their melancholy interview could be gathered only from the lonely reflections of Colebrooke as he wandered in the wood.

“The arrow has flown and it quivers in my heart!” said he, in a low faltering voice. “Perhaps, I have been weak, for the world exults in the triumph of strong and detestable passions. Love has been the Lord of my nature—the foun-

tain of my rapture—the very Phlegethon of my agony.—Alas! and am I sunk so low? am I who would canonize the object of my profoundest regard, humbled by her treachery to the vile condition of a traitor to myself and my good name, and an apostate from the religion in which my fathers adored their Maker? My poor father! he wept while he condemned my anguish and abandonment; he rose into indignant remonstrance and bitterness of expression while he demanded and I refused to part from *her*. Why should his arguments and persuasions be in vain? She has never fulfilled my dreams of her excellence—she has little consulted my good or the welfare of our children—and this accursed revelation of her dishonor brands burning execration upon her name. Then why embrace the flame and perish when I might flee and be safe? Woe—woe—woe to the devoted heart! it must cling, like the withered ivy, to the crumbling temple of its song and praise; it must stand, like the palm planted a thousand years ago and flourishing over extinguished generations, undecayed and unshaken. These broad lands, on which I have taken so much pride and pleasure, will pass to the stranger—and, in his tender mercy, he might grant me the privilege to be his tenant during good behavior! Let madness come ere such an offer, and death ere I am tempted to its acceptance. I have sinned in kindness; I have fallen because I loved unwisely; but if I must be a hireling and a slave, none whom I know shall witness it.” He turned toward the house and Elizabeth met him, in tears, at the door. “The mortgage expires to-morrow,” said she, “have we no hope of its redemption? Can you not yet retain the estate? Your father loves you, husband.”

“Husband!” said he, wildly—“oh, yes—it is heaven’s truth! would it were not!”

“What do you say? Will he not help us in our need as a father should?”

"Yes, upon one condition, Elizabeth—that—that we part—for ever."

"I acquiesce in the harsh decision, if it be for your good, Walter. I will disprove scandal and illustrate my love for you by resigning every thing that makes life dear and honorable. I am ready for the sacrifice."

"But I am not," said Colebrooke, deeply agitated, "though I know my refusal will be my destruction. We must depart hence on Tuesday, Elizabeth." "Where shall we go?" "Where none shall mock us with their condolences." "You will not change your name!" "I have changed my nature," said Walter, in a tone of such fervent mournfulness that no heart but that of indurated selfishness could have resisted the force of its remorseful pathos. But a woman without feeling and principle, like the night wanderer on the battlefield, will search the dying man for gold and deny a cup of cold water to his death-thirst. She will grasp the rich loose mantle of the wretch who is falling down the precipice, and turn away, heedless of the last shriek that ascends from the unfathomed gulf below.

Walter rose early on the following morning, but Elizabeth had anticipated him. His mind was wrought up to the capacity of enduring the anguish he was doomed to undergo, and he uttered neither inquiry nor remark upon a circumstance sufficiently surprising; for his wife had not witnessed a sunrise for ten years. Hours passed slowly on, dropping their arrows, each moment, upon his riven heart; and breakfast had been long delayed ere he was summoned. "Where is Mrs. Colebrooke?" said he, as he took his place, for the last time, at his own table. "She went out very early, and has not yet returned," replied the old domestic. "Strange! but she has probably gone to a neighbor's to pass the day, and escape the scene of humiliation soon to ensue. Well. I would not wish her to witness it—

though she might have told me and taken the children with her. Poor desolate creatures ! ye know not half the insult and bondage and misery to which ye will be subject in this unpitying world. Did Elizabeth leave no direction ! did she say nothing as she went out !”

“Not a word, sir ; she was dressed in the purple silk you bought for her the siller day ; and I thought she seemed anxious to avoid observation, though she turned at the corner of the garden and looked back earnestly for a minute ; then she quickly disappeared in the grove yonder.”

“She will never come to her home again, if she stays till night !” said Colebrooke, rising from the meal which he had scarcely tasted. Gathering his children around him, he sat down under a beautiful sycamore tree in front of the house, and awaited, without apparent emotion, the arrival of bidders on his inheritance.

The creditors, the auctioneer and the interested crowd collected ; and Walter stood in the midst of the multitude, gazing steadily upon the crowd of faces around him, without seeming to recognise even his most familiar acquaintances. He stood like a pilgrim beholding a pageant in which he could have no interest or fellowship ; like a dying man in gilded halls re-echoing shouts of revelry. A very few commiserated his misfortunes, and forgot not in his poverty the noble qualities he had displayed in his prosperity ; but the great throng, instigated by the grasping and pitiless spirit of avarice, scorned and trampled on the victim to seize the plunder. The elder Colebrooke was there, and he approached the hopeless outcast under the influence of an emotion which shook his mighty nature. “This is no time nor place my son,” said he, “to declare how much I love and mourn over you. You may yet be rescued, and these unhappy children of a most erring and accountable mother may not be cast upon the world to be the mockery

of the heartless. The sale is hurried; let me redeem your lands—but say that I may do it and you are again established far above all who insult your misery now. I do not see *her*; she leaves you to bear the evil—she reapt the benefit with an unsparing hand. Speak, Walter, shall I stop the sale?" The old gentleman stood trembling; his son paused, looked upon his ill-fated boys and sighed; his lip quivered, his brow grew ghastly, his wild thoughts were rushing along the desert of his present agony to seek, once more, the green isles and sunny fountains of past enjoyment. His bosom heaved convulsively, and the bitter tears of a strong man channelled his burning cheeks, but he did not speak.

"We are losing an opportunity which will never return," said Mr. Colebrooke anxiously, as he heard the loud, rapid and insolent voice of the auctioneer. "Resolve, my son—resolve to save yourself and your children—quick, let me hear your voice."

"Father!" he replied with despairing solemnity, "you have my last, my deepest thanks for all the kindness, the generosity and forbearance you have bestowed upon me; but I have done. Though I might recover my estate, I could never recover the peace of mind or the health of body which I once enjoyed. I can neither pray, act nor feel anything but the last hopelessness. I have loved Elizabeth for many eventful and trying years; she is the mother of my boys—she has been the partner of my pillow—she was the charm of my youth—and, though I must believe her guilt ere we met, yet she has been, not one dares to deny, most faithful since."

"The maiden, that sins as she feared not to do, will prove a faithless wife if by perfidy she can accomplish her object better than by fidelity."

“Well, well!” said Walter, in the impatient tone of irritable misfortune—“I do believe that Elizabeth, with all her faults, loves me as much as her nature will permit her to love any one but herself. We have been rich and now are nothing—we have been happy but must pass on henceforth without a smile of joy. Save our children, father, when I am no more! but we will retire to the wilderness and die together! After the miserable months of my better life, it is not much to die; the convulsive pangs of dissolution would be ecstasy to the lingering anguish of persecuted days.”

“Walter! Walter!” exclaimed the heartstruck father, “why will you heap sorrow on my grey hairs! why will you darken council by words without knowledge! why will you adhere to this fatal resolve! They are trafficking away the field on which we stand—they are balancing the dust on which we tread! why will you pause in your temporal salvation! why will you break the heart that aches for you?”

“My dear, venerated, most generous father! I implore your prayers, your tears, your forgiveness! Let not unkind thoughts dwell on my unhappy memory! let not grief, hovering over the promise of my boyhood, concentrate upon the dire consummation of my less childish but not wiser years! These poor homeless wanderers shall stay with me till all is over: then, father, I shall commit them to your guidance with dying hopes that they may be better and happier than the author of their being.”

“It shall be as you determine, my wretched child!” said Mr. Colebrooke.

“May Eternal Providence preserve you, my father! lament me not when I am gone—this state will not long continue. Tell the world, sir, when my name belongs to the dead, that I loved without wisdom and that I fell through the weakness of an affection which could not change its

object. Henceforth, I belong neither to my family nor to society—the one I should disgrace and the other I will not seek. From this hour, father, you will hear of me no more till a messenger brings my children under your roof, and relates my death. Farewell, father, farewell for ever.” Walter fell upon his father’s neck ; hot tears scalded his corroded features ; his whole frame quivered beneath the deadly pulsations of his bosom. Nature could not sustain the wild whirlwind—the *siroc of feeling*—the *billow of the mind* ! They parted as those part who will never meet again ; the sun went down the glowing sky of August—the sale passed, and Walter was alone with his unprovided boys. The old gentleman returned to his home in still and deep sorrow ; for Walter, acting upon the sensitive pride of his nature, refused not only to accompany him to the dwelling of his childhood until he had prepared another residence for the weary limbs of his children, but peremptorily scorned the civil offer of his creditors to inhabit the mansion which was once his own, while his affairs were undecided. Darkness had descended upon the landscape ere he became conscious of his children’s necessities or his wife’s long absence. Starting suddenly as these convictions shot across his mind, he looked up, and, perceiving his old female domestic standing near, as if waiting for his commands, “Prudence” said he, “why are you here? My house, lands, respect and credit—all have gone—and why should you remain to serve one who can never repay your kindness or give you more than fruitless thanks for all your labor and love?”

“Should I be a serpent to wound the heart that warmed me : should I leave you alone when all but your poor servant have left you? No! I have had a home in your house—I have been happy in your abundance for ten long years ; and I do not forget that you saved me, in my want.

from the poorhouse. No—no! Mr. Colebrooke, I shall not leave you nor the boys. Let me go where you go! let me stay with you till my grey hairs are gathered for the grave!”

“Well, my good Prudence! you shall not be denied, and your friendship is pleasant in the midst of my trouble. You shall go with us—and we are happy in the tried fidelity of one true friend. But Elizabeth delays—where shall we seek her? Perhaps the sympathy of our neighbor Makepeace has taught her to forget her afflictions and the humiliations of her family; let us go and inquire!” The crescent moon hung on the verge of the sky when they arrived at the appointed farmhouse of an opulent proprietor.—Walter received an insolent and negative reply to his anxious enquiries—“Elizabeth had not been there—Makepeace did not know where she was—he was not the restorer of people’s lost wives—he was not the keeper of a bankrupt’s family—he had enough of his own to care for”—and he shut the door in the face of one whom in other days he would not have dared to address.

Colebrooke turned away in silent, ineffable indignation. “This is the man,” thought he, in his voiceless mind, for by words he wished not to infect the principles of his inexperienced boys, “this is the man who founded his good fortune on the thousand dollars I loaned him when I was not a beggar nor my name an interdiction. And now, the unmanly churl replies to me, as if my voice spoke blasphemy and my presence inspired infamy! I am too unblest to utter malisons, or I would breathe out my soul against this renegade and miscreant.”

Attended by the faithful Prudence (though the poverty of her master was in her person appalling) Walter wandered from house to house, encouraging sometimes and often bearing alternately, in his arms, his homeless babes, to seek

for a mother who had sought happier fortunes, and, as she imagined, less variable advantages from her first love, the seducer of her youth, the destroyer of her wedded affections. No one knew where she was—they had not seen her during many days—they were exceedingly sorry that Mr. Colebrooke should have encountered such a loss—they requested and urged him to remain in their houses—he should be most welcome—the children were worn out—perhaps *she* would be there ere morning; but Colebrooke saw through the transparent veil of interest and prejudice and chose rather to commit his weeping boys to the protection of nature in a naked meadow than accept the condescending charity of his commiserating and contemning neighbors. When all search was in vain, the deluded and desolate outcast turned upon his steps and bore in his folded arms two of his sleeping infants over a lonely and rocky road two miles in length, to the only inn the place afforded—Prudence affectionately toiling beneath the weight of the eldest. Laid upon decent beds, the unconscious because inexperienced sufferers sunk into dreamless slumbers;—the affectionate nurse soon followed them (for the strongest and most self-sacrificing sympathy cannot approach the intense feeling of parental love) and Colebrooke again was left alone in his voiceless grief.

Messages of evil are soon conveyed to the only person who should *not* hear them. Mankind intuitively rejoice in awakening the fiercest or most melancholy feelings of nature; as no one thinks or writes to prove himself happy, so no one derives pleasure from the communication of joy at all comparable to the ecstasy resulting from misfortune. Couriers will hasten to impart the news of disaster, but delay to feast when they are charged with joyful tidings. The morning had scarcely dawned ere *a friend* desired to see Colebrooke. He entered and saluted the unrested and unblest man with

an aspect of profound mystery and self-consequence. "As somewhat disagreeable has happened," said he, with perfect composure, "I thought it was proper to speak to you on the subject, Mr. Colebrooke."

"You are right," Walter replied, "but the business is over and I have had too much sorrow to desire its revival. You mean that my estate is sold and that I am a beggar—and you have come very kindly to tell me so!"

"No, indeed, Mr. Colebrooke!" said the slow informer, "I knew all that before, and was very sorry surely—but I bought your favorite meadow at a pretty bargain and Squire Hayfield purchased all your pasture ground at less than half the original value—and our Rev. Mr. Defylord is the owner of all the woodland which"——

"Mr.—Mr.—I forget your name but see your nature. Is this kindness? did this news instigate you to break in upon my repose? Was I not, think you, sufficiently informed of my own misfortunes but I must still be indebted to you?"

"Nay, nay, Mr. Colebrooke," replied the imperturbable visitant, "I thought you would like to know how your fine inheritance had been divided; but since you refuse to hear me on that subject, I have another at hand which may be more agreeable to you. As I was tending my sheep, early yesterday, I saw through the woods Elizabeth—I beg pardon, sir, I mean Mrs. Colebrooke"——

"What of her?" said Walter, springing violently from his seat, "what of her?"

"Why nothing but that she got into a fine coach with the absconded apprentice of an apothecary, called Daleho, and went off at a round pace through the forest, smiling on her protector as if he had delivered her from destruction."

"Enough! enough!" Colebrooke exclaimed, "you have said enough, sir—and you are a true friend, sir—and a good

member of civilized society, sir—and I owe you for your trouble, sir, a great reward!" Walter strode forward in a wild passion, seized the officious communicant by the shoulders, and with a rigid application of his foot, sent him to the base of the staircase. The benevolent spy cursed him after the most approved formula of sorcery and Manichæism—imprecated every pitiless malediction in life upon his head—and, after proclaiming before the vagabond assembly of the tavern that he would institute a ferocious prosecution for assault against the pauper Colebrooke, departed from the scene of his malignity and vain boasting like a beaten and cowering hound. But when the heartless and unmannered scandal-bearer had gone and his malign relation had sunk into the bosom of the deserted husband, what were the thoughts of his desolate and trampled condition? He had deemed it singular that Elizabeth should leave him in his perplexity—he had thought it strange that she had taken away with her, on the previous morning, all her valuable articles of attire; but the dreadful certainty, now, that she had left him—her husband in extremity for a paramour—the father of her children for a mindless miscreant it was a disgrace to name—came over his excited and tortured spirit like the blast of the samiel. Plundered, calumniated and abandoned—a broken reed which not even his little babe could lean upon—without consolation and without resource except in the restoration of a mind bowed down to the dust—whither should he depart, or how shun the condolences of friends and the insulting pity of enemies disguised? His only hope was in oblivion. "My father was right," he murmured, "a woman, once sinning, sins for ever; she passes beyond all hope of reprieve—all conception of forgiveness. Oh, 'tis bitter—bitter—bitter to resign her—evil as she is—to lose eternally her pleasant smile, her winning voice—to roam along a lonely traveller in the wilderness of life—a

solitary pilgrim whom all know and none salutes with kindness. But 'tis better to bear this than to endure the wrongs inflicted by a faithless wife and a deserting mother ; it is better to die than to live dishonored."

His children awoke from their sinless sleep, and in their caresses he found a mournful pleasure and an absorbing interest which permitted him not to dwell with concentrated sorrow upon the most fearful event of his life. It is easy to discourse, like Fundanus, with philosophical precision and cogency of remark upon the miseries of others, to assign to them their distinctions and limits, to reprehend their indulgence and utter disgust or indignation over their excess ; but it is an arduous conquest to feel and bear in silence—to quiver beneath the rack yet reveal no pang—to dwell in banishment and solitude and find no want of society. There is one crime in woman past all atonement ; but it cannot efface, in a feeling heart, remembrances of joy and affection, of endearments once sincere and pure, of sacrifices once offered up on the altar of Love. Though he dwelt upon Elizabeth's guilt and flight with the bitterness of undeserved misfortune—though he knew and felt that she had been the cause of all his wretchedness, yet he, ere long, discovered that his thoughts recurred to her image with delight and lamented rather over lost enjoyment than present woe.

The gorgeous light of day broke in upon his dismal thoughts ; and, feeling that the brightness of life had departed from his bosom, he turned to the glorious sun and said, " why dost thou mock me with thy beams ? why make visible the gloom which sinks deeper and deeper around the last joy that is left me ? " But his children asked for bread and he aroused himself to supply their necessities. Forgetting, for once, his customary improvidence, he had preserved a few dollars in secret ; some relics of his youthful ornaments yet remained ; and these now gave food to the

hungry and a place of transient sojourn to the houseless.—Collecting and depositing in a passing market waggon, in which he had hired seats for himself and his boys, the miserable remnants of his wardrobe, he departed from the midst of a curious and worthless crowd, who could wish him well and bid God bless him though not one would have saved him from ruin with the gift of a solitary shilling. Such is the sympathy of men; the sources of respect always lie among the yellow dust of the mine, and the waters, that refresh the faint wanderer, must flow from a golden mountain. So Walter felt, as he uttered one cold farewell to all, and left his birthplace without one lingering look or sigh over the changed and darkened scene.

There is no storm like the exasperated and darkened intellect; there is nothing in the long catalogue of human miseries so melancholy as the ingenuous mind clouded in the brightness of being and convulsed by the whirlwinds of passion. Early and dear-bought contempt of the world excites pity and sorrow in thoughtful minds; for it is intimately associated with habitual gloom and personal unhappiness. Misfortune may be borne without affectionate soothers; it may exhaust its stores of grief and allay itself; but when it is goaded by malevolence, insulted by mediocrity and pursued by unrelenting hate, the darkness of a dreadful purpose settles upon the brain and casts the lurid glare of disastrous prophecy upon every thought, feeling, person and deed from time to eternity!—

While Walter thus, in his desperation, sought his last earthly refuge in obscurity, the wife, for whom he had sacrificed every thing valuable in existence, was journeying with joyous rapidity in the company of her lover, towards the mansion of her conscious prostitution. She was flying with her lover! Oh, the miserable perversion of epithet—the atrocity of morals—the arrogance and profligacy of

remorseless and unrighteous judges ! Lover ! shame laughs and purity shudders at the word—destruction dwells amidst the ruins of his habitation, and death exults over his vows and his crimes ! Dalcho was an adroit deceiver ; he comprehended perfectly the power of persuasion, the force of argument, and the blandishments of love. He could rouse indignation at inflicted wrong, soothe with bland duplicities the scorpions of remorse, and inspire the reluctant spirit of sin with the inveterate malignity of hell. Even now, failing, through his vices, in the vocation to which he had been indented, he turned his evil thoughts, as an ultimate resort, to the ministry ; and, to disguise his accursed propensities before the world, he carried a concordance in one pocket and a hymn book in the other, and at his different places of stoppage on his lascivious route, while Elizabeth was reposing on the bed of adultery, he was accustomed to visit every country conference, and exhibit his accomplishments in the character of an “ indigent student of divinity from the theological school of ——.” His extemporaneous prayers had a peculiar unction—a fascinating charm in their free expression before the Deity—of passions and desires not to be uttered to man ; and every penitent young lady in each parish he visited, was willing to repent, once for all, of past and *future* sins. “ What a charming youth !” said Miss Almira Lilyvale—“ how I felt under his sweet and refreshing discourse ! Ch. how happy we should be under the ministry of such a gifted young man of God ! he would be the light of holy love to every village and many a convert would call him blest !”

“ Yes !” replied Miss Dolly Freelove, “ I am sure I never heard a sweeter voice, nor saw a prettier form in my life.—Did you observe how he gazed at *us* when he held forth on the eternal importance of night conferences and secret communion ? My heart burned within me while he

pictured the rapture which springs from concerts and interesting conversations by the way. How happy his sister must be in such a friend and companion? His piety must render even her illness blest. Shall we visit her, Almira, at the inn?"

"It is nearly twelve now," said Miss Lilyvale, "and Mr. Dalcho leaves us to-morrow early, for a southern station.—That sacred nursery of gospel teachers at —— never sent forth a more beautiful apostle—would he could leave some fruits of his great powers behind him! But we will hope that Providence may cause him again to visit this part of his vineyard, and infuse into us his spirit."

"Let it be our earnest prayer!" exclaimed the exemplary Miss Freelove, "that the landmarks of a cold and vicious morality may disappear before him; that fervent and fearless religion, which is degraded by forms, and destroyed by boasted deeds, may triumph in his eloquence, and breathe out saving grace in which alone all hope resides!—The dear youth hastens to the field of his labor; may heaven crown his toil with increase!" Thus the seducer with the desertrice traversed a portion of our vast country, not less remarkable for its industry, morals, and true piety, than, from that very reason, for the facility with which it is abused. Grave features, elaborate enunciation, and ready utterance of certain ecclesiastical watchwords—such as utter inability to do good, and yet eternal accountability for doing ill—the worthlessness of works, and no redemption without them—the omnipotence of divine grace, and the impossibility of acquiring it—constituted, in too many communities, almost all the requisite qualifications of an expounder of holy writ, and a guide to everlasting happiness. The fluent use of terms and epithets disguised ignorance, weakness and destitution of principle; and thus the cool, collected and politic villain was permitted to pass not only unpur-

sued by the maledictions he merited, but amidst the applauses and smiles of the admiring public. The public ! armed with all its vigilance, its edicts, fashions, requirements and ceremonies, it is the prey of the hypocrite, the victim of the prodigal ! Law, some one has said, is a web to catch insects, but the daring strong animal goes free. Custom is the tyrant of weak men, (we may continue the apothegm) but the slave of the powerful ; and religion is, with the truly good, the best solace and support, but with the wicked, the vassal of crime and the mask of dishonor.

Elizabeth, on her flight, had written a long and artful letter to her father, assigning cogent reasons for her conduct, and giving him directions for a reply, which could not reach her till remonstrance would be in vain ; but, otherwise, she had not dared to mingle with the several societies that Dalcho instructed, nor had she sought other happiness than that she found in his affections. When their burning lips met in a convulsive kiss, she forgot the husband who had adored her—the children who had clung to her denying heart—the vows she had uttered—the faith she had sacrificed—the sanctities she had polluted and trampled under foot. She met Dalcho with a smile that had no shade of sadness, for a thoroughly bad woman cannot be melancholy : she admired the romantic scenery, for a wicked female can talk sentiment ; she complimented her lover upon his eloquence at the conferences, for she revered consummate deception. Exclusively selfish, she indulged no hope, she allowed no thought to enter her mind except it tended to her personal gratification ; she loved others for her own enjoyment, and left them without hatred or remembrance, because her love of ease would not permit her to cherish an inmate so annoying. Every thing was inestimable as it contributed to her pleasure ; every thing disgusting as it invaded her tranquillity. She had discovered that Cole-

brooke entertained no hope of restoration on the evening previous to her flight ; but she had written to Dalcho and appointed a place of rendezvous before her last conversation with her husband.—Had Walter consented to recover his estate by forsaking her, she would have been justified, she thought, in throwing herself into the embraces of a less treacherous lover ; had he regained his former wealth through the conditional friendship of some humane security, she would have preferred her station as an independent wife and honored mother to the dangerous relation of a renegade mistress ; but seeing nothing left, and the prospect of privation and labor before her, she chose to encounter every risk and be subject to reproaches she had not principle enough to fear.

They embarked at New-York, after Dalcho had purchased for her the gaities and amusements of that great city, and arrived in a few days at the most aristocratic of the southern capitals. Here Dalcho's first business was to invent letters of introduction ; his next, to obtain, upon the credit of those letters, a sufficient collection of drugs, medicines, colored waters, and marble soda fountains to constitute an inviting establishment as an apothecary. A sum of money, which the burglar might imagine how he had acquired, enabled him to maintain his own and the exorbitant expenses of his reputed sister Elizabeth without encroaching too much upon the good nature and liberality of the southrons ; and the common tact of scoundrelism, joined to a manner seductive, courteous and compliant, did not leave him long without company and profit. He was a punctual observer of ceremonies, a devoted respecter of rector and vestry, of bishop and landgrave, of clergy and opulent laymen ; he recommended a more rigorous system of flagellation to the slave holders, and partook the sacrament ; he denounced the insolent publicity of the courtesan, and

went home to Mrs. Colebrooke ; he advocated the majesty and incorruptibility of masonry, and believed Morgan was a political phantom ; he asserted the unalienable rights of the state in opposition to the general government, and became, ere long, the fashionable distributor of physic, politics and pestilence. His respectability increased in proportion to his credit at the bank ; *his sister* Elizabeth became a favorite among the exclusive and discerning ; he studied surgery, and could amputate an alligator ; he pursued philosophy, and was able to solve the causes of many things better than that of the general infatuation, which in respect to himself, pervaded the community ; he was a disciple of the parish priest, and, being fitted to distinguish Duns Scotus from Abelard and Calvinistic impracticability from Arminian indulgences, he was esteemed a very exemplary and advancing ornament of the church.

Thus established and respected, he became at the same time satiated by the remorseless affections of Elizabeth, and fearful lest some unlucky rencontre with a PILGRIM acquaintance should overthrow his perfect scheme of fortune. By degrees he neglected her, assailed her with accusations of petty offences, and denied her all explanation. Then, as he became more certain that his philosophy could not endure the detection of his assumed piety, he poured upon her reproaches and abuse—shamelessly recalled her first disgrace, of which he had been the author, and her latter desertion of her family, of which he had been at least the encourager. Elizabeth saw his object, and resolved in her hardened heart not to be, in every respect, his victim.—During his temporary absence, affecting to be ill, she forced his escritoir and took thence a rouleau of doubloons ; she laid unhallowed hands upon his casket of jewels—the ambiguous legacy of a Jew whom he had converted—into unconsciousness ; and, having deposited these necessary

atonements for disgrace in the midst of her fashionable habiliments, she very quietly, and with a conscience perfectly at ease, entered a postchaise, which three days before, certain of Dalcho's departure, she had ordered to be ready at daylight, and left her exemplary *brother* to his own reflections.

Circumvented by his own intended sacrifice, and dreading to answer the enquiries, which he knew would be instituted by the magnates of the realm, Dalcho hastily committed his shop to the care and direction of a *congenial* spirit, whom he therefore took especial precautions to bind by heavy legal penalties to the fulfilment of his contract, and, under disguise of imperative business, fled on board a vessel then leaving the harbor for the coast of Africa. Here he obtained the lucrative situation of surgeon of a slave ship. No human creature was ever better qualified for such an office, and he discharged its duties with entire satisfaction. To the most awful secrecy was added immediate and perpetual compliance with the slave captain's commands; his own guilt taught him not to expose another's, and his druggist scheme of flattery and submission, not to hesitate in the adoption of any principles and measures. He was required, farther, to torment the healthy negroes, that they might learn to bear pain without complaints; in this his surgical skill was preeminent; and to despatch those sickly wretches whom the sailors disliked to see thrown overboard alive. For these services his salary was very liberal; and by his sincere devotion to his captain, he soon secured the privilege of sitting at his table, and thereby gratifying his appetite and thirst with luxuries, while hundreds were dying of heat and famine beneath him. His lancet and his lips were in constant action—the one in the work of death, the other in that of revelry on board a slave ship under the blazing sun of the tropics.

While the daughter of a proud, scheming, and evil abuser of the gospel—the deserting wife of a confident and unwise victim was gathering, first the harvest of her infamy, and, latterly, the spoils of her disgrace—poor Walter Colebrooke had sought shelter amidst the ordeal of his afflictions and disasters in an abandoned hovel, among the most solitary wilds of Ware. He had lost his pride, his capacities of enjoyment, his erect and sublime independence of character—all but the noble principle, which, heretofore, had guided all his actions, and even that had been terribly assailed by the deadening and destructive influence of that transient soother, but ultimate ruin of many an exalted mind, which either from pleasure or sorrow has become habituated to its indulgence. Larch and pine thickets surrounded and overhung his miserable abode, and indicated the arid nature of the soil around. Mount Monadnoch gazed from his icy pinnacle, day after day, upon the breathing monument of past happiness, and seemed through its vast forest to sigh a requiem over powers and feelings there seemed no hope of restoring. A wide and gloomy morass almost encompassed the hut, and sent up from its pestilential bosom clouds of miasma, which would have borne death to any other heart. But the fated must languish—the despairing must expect, year after year, the infliction of that stroke, which terminates all suffering. The opulent, the happy may die in the very zenith of their power and splendor, but the poor and joyless often vainly desire to be “where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.” Prudence, the faithful domestic, who had clung to him through every difficulty and trial of his adverse fortunes, occupied herself now in constant attempts to promote his personal comfort, and the welfare of the children. She persuaded Colebrooke to repair the

desolate hut—she desired a neighboring mechanic to offer his services to her master—she borrowed the necessary household utensils and instruments of labor from those who, though strangers to Walter, had not forgotten a wise and just humanity. The sequestered abode of the outcast soon looked, if not pleasant, yet neat and orderly ; his sons were sent daily to a district school, which assisted by its humble efforts in the dissemination of that manly knowledge so characteristic of the honest and principled Yeomanry of New England. When Walter came home from the mercenary toil, to which his utter poverty doomed him now, and Prudence read in his cheerless face the evidences of his wasting despair, she met him with kind words of welcome and a smile of encouragement, and guided him to a healthful repast in a cleanly room, where voices of love and gratitude saluted his wearied senses and inspired his desponding heart. The effect of this sublime though lowly devotion to his feelings and interests, was, for a time, the entire abandonment of evil habit, perfect consecration of all his powers to the good of the loved objects still left to him, and a steady prosecution of profitable though arduous labor, which soon promised to relieve him from his present abject penury.

His boys, so long the sport and prey of reckless and licentious example, now departed to the forest school and returned to their humble but happy home with elastic steps and cheerful eyes, which their father contemplated in thoughtful silence till the beautiful light of his youth, the bliss of his sinless years stole over him with an elysian influence. He was unknown to all in that wild region—for none of the settlers had ever seen him before and beneath the ruins of his fortune he had buried his proud name.—“That, at least,” said he, “shall be no more disgraced ; not one of this low throng, with whom I dig for hire, shall ever know that

Walter Colebrooke has sunk to *his* condition." Constant action, nourishing food, and the abjuration of that certain condemner of man—the fluid flame of hell—soon wrought their salutary effects upon his person, thoughts and feelings. Profound melancholy still sometimes infected his spirit, and his sleepless bed of moss was often wet with tears of midnight agony, which he forgot to dry, and *no friend* was near to wipe away. He could not but dwell upon what had been and now was; he could not always resist the deluge of stormy memories nor exorcise the spirits that arose upon his vision from the shattered and lone temple of his affections. He knew that Elizabeth had sold herself to Dalcho and perdition—that he should never address or acknowledge her again—and the exasperated stings of wounded pride, yet looking fondly back to the world he had deserted, often convulsed his frame with mortal anguish. But with the daylight, that summoned him to the field, better and more tranquil reflections went over him like the evening breeze of summer over the still waters. His secret, he thought, was inviolable, his health was almost restored, young minds began to develope their hidden capacities and surround his refuge with the incense of love, gratitude and respect; much yet depended upon him; and the very consciousness that others require our aid in their helplessness not seldom saves *us* from destruction. Untouched by his frugal and industrious housekeeper, his daily gains accumulated, month after month, and inspired him with a growing hope that he might, in a few years, forsake his cabin in the wilderness, and, once more, in a distant town, among equal society, and under the name he had assumed, rise up as the shorn and blinded Israelite arose from his dungeon when Dagon demanded his awful worship. No better pupils attracted the regard and approbation of the schoolmaster than his; no more obedient children ever blessed a father in his sorrow-

The boisterous mirth of their past years disappeared with the neglect into which extravagance and misery had cast them; they were too young to comprehend the full extent of their parent's grief, but, feeling amidst his sorrows that his only joy flowed from their moral purity and intellectual advancement, they omitted no word or deed that could soothe and please him. His smile was their best reward, and their improvement his highest pleasure.

Thus his disasters seemed fruitful of good, and his trials but the mistaken sources of virtue, knowledge and happiness. His eye grew bright, his form towered up in its manly pride again, his labor seemed light when he thought upon his sons, and every one respected the stranger without attempting to search out the secret of his residence among them.

Thus, with few events to diversify his life, four years passed away. The necessity of unremitted toil allows no alternations and changes meriting prolonged description; early slumbers and daylight risings, perpetual fatigue, the lusty appetite of health and unbroken rest are the husbandman's portion and blessing. Aside from these common characteristics, Walter displayed almost uniformly, during the latter weeks of the period mentioned, a moral and mental renovation, *an aurora borealis of the mind*, whose light, reflected from his better days, seemed to expand and increase in brightness the longer it rested on the ice of his bosom.—Philosophy and religion entered the mansion of woe and charmed the dreadful inmate into the sleep of at least transient oblivion. The smile of nature, (that beautiful image of the divinity pervading the world, which evil passion has so long desecrated and swept with the besom of despair) glided over the heaving depths of his spirit and hushed its wild mournings. He grew resigned, temperate, benign to all and almost happy. He thought upon his treacherous

wife without asperity, he recalled the unkind words and actions which had so incensed and afflicted him after his misfortunes, and forgave them all in the sincerity of a heart that had sometime offended and been forgiven.

In this serene condition, late in the autumn, he was desired by a wealthy farmer to convey his dairy to the Boston market. Such had been his industry and attachment to the interests of his employers that none feared to entrust him with goods of even greater value than those for which he was about to become responsible. The loaded wagon was ready and early on the following day he was to depart. He sat long that evening in silence and deep thought; his features betrayed the unhappy reflections which were hurrying, like the first clouds of the tempest, over his excited soul. At length he said, "come hither, my children!" and he folded them severally to his breast with a prolonged and earnest strength of affection, kissed them ardently and made them sit down beside him. "You have been good boys and I have done what I could for you since your mo——, I mean since I was very poor. You will not forget your studies while I am away—and you—that should be heir to something more than poverty and grief—not of fortune but *to* fortune, must relieve and support your only female friend, for she is old and has been very faithful—till I come back. God knows it is exceeding hard for me to leave you; but Mr. Greenwood allows me liberally for the journey, and though something is now laid up, we need much more. Do n't worry poor Prudence by any idle fears about me—the way is long but not solitary, and I shall find company on the road."

"But, dear father!" said the eldest, "when will you return? it is not so very far to Boston and the highways are good. When will you return?"

"I cannot be sure, my son! Time is necessary to make sales, and the load is very large. But think well upon your school lessons do n't fail to mind what Prudence says to you, and be very careful that no evil befalls you when I can see you no more. And now, my dear boys! kiss me again—tell me how much you have learned when I come back—and—and—God Almighty bless and preserve you! Good night! good night!"

With a strong effort he suppressed his tears until his children had reached their rude chamber; then misgiving nature gave way and he wept long and bitterly. Prudence returned from her domestic cares and anxiously inquired the cause of his distress. "Indeed, I know not myself!" said he, mournfully, "but strange apprehensions haunt me that this journey will be unfortunate. Perhaps my mind has been weakened by sorrow, for I have had my portion; perhaps, falsehood and desertion, in one instance, have made me overweening and fearful. I have not indulged this desponding mood for many a day before, but I cannot resist it now."

"I had hoped, my dear sir, that this was over," said his only true friend—the self-sacrificing companion of his troubles—"and it will sorely grieve me if you go away with a heavy heart; it is not necessary that you should go at all—stay, I beseech you, if you have cause to fear any danger or trouble."

"I have no cause, Prudence! I felt very content till I started from Mr. Greenwood's to come home, and then, all on a sudden, something shot across my mind that I should never more return from this journey. But, perhaps, I am acting very foolishly; I do not wish to leave my poor boys alone in this hard-hearted world, and the thought that some evil might happen to them or you or me is, I doubt not, now, the only source of the uneasiness I feel. But if any thing

unlucky should chance to me, you will find a letter to my father in that bureau and a small sum of money to supply your wants. I commit my dear boys to your faithful charge and know that you will take them to my father's house, if I do not return. Nay, my kind friend, shed no tears over fancies ! every one's life is doubtful and in health we should prepare for death. If I am alive, three weeks from this time, you will see me again ; if not, carry my children to their grandfather's house ; and may heaven bless you and them !"

Walter arose, ere dawn, from his miserable unrest, and, after partaking slightly of a generous breakfast which awaited him, he bade farewell to his old devoted and weeping friend, and commenced his journey. His hovel was everywhere environed, as has been said, by gloomy woods and marshes, and he had slowly travelled the ill-made forest road for nearly half a mile ere a rising ground permitted him to look back upon his tabernacle in the wilderness. He paused, his eyes filled with tears and his lips quivered beneath the agony of thoughts they would not utter. An awful stillness hung over the dense forest ; the cold melancholy dawn dimly showed, through floating vapor, his humble dwelling standing, as he did among men, in utter solitude. But the blue swelling smoke reminded him that one heart still cherished for him and his boys a spotless and profound affection which age could not extinguish nor misfortune lessen. Cheered by that consoling truth, and resolved, through every peril, to do his perfect duty, he withdrew the last glance he was ever to cast upon the home of his sorrows, and with a loud urging cry to his horses, that echoed ominously through the deep woods, he plunged down the eminence and gained the highroad to Boston. The beautiful sun of autumn was lighting him on his unattended expedition, ere the tender sufferers by orphanage,

that springs not from the grave, awoke and looked vainly around for a father they would see no more.

The fortune of others will often flourish most in the hands of the habitually unfortunate, and he who in his youth has toiled in hopelessness and in his manhood shrunk from the conflict of implacable animosities, where his own person or interest is unconnected, may "win golden opinions from all sorts of men." This Walter proved when utter poverty had exorcised the malign demon of his fate, and his prudence and sagacity contributed to prosperity and opulence not his own. Ere the lapse of a se'ennight, he had wisely discharged his office in Boston and was prepared to return with honor to render an account of his stewardship. Conscious that none could have fulfilled with better discretion the expectations of the farmer, he was returning, late at night, along Cornhill, (it bears a loftier appellation now) sadly reflecting on the many sorrows and abasements to which, in his brief pilgrimage, he had been singularly exposed; but his thoughts had lost in their humility much of the bitter exasperation which his trials had been, previously, calculated to inspire. He was now utterly alone, and his hoarded affections, defying the wrong, the opprobrium, the desertion and despair of other years, burst from the fountain of his heart in a tumultuous flood. He again met Elizabeth in the assemblies of youth, and his spirit luxuriated in her winning smile; he led her to the altar of Love and felt that her presence was paradise; he clasped his firstborn to his bosom, and exclaimed "I am too blest for earth in the possession of all that makes the bliss of heaven." Then successive seasons of rewarded industry and calm enjoyment and enlarged influence floated over his soul and renewed their various scenes to his melancholy contemplation. With a fascinated fondness, a delirious devotion, he still dwelt upon the memory of his dishonored wife; and, as the

eastern convict, doomed to approach the terrible upas and gather up its poison, looks earnestly at each trembling step for some faint impressions of a returning footprint—some vestige of safely accomplished penance ;—so Colebrooke, even against his prouder and purer nature yet dared to hope that Elizabeth might be rescued from her desperation—might even be restored—he did almost think—to her motherless children in the forest. Mitigated by the balmy breath of concentrated affection, even her guilt seemed less unpardonable, less meriting direful punishment than at its first commission, and in the humbled spirit of poor Walter, thus wandering in his loneliness, the thought that she might discover his solitary home of banishment, lament the error of her sad temptation, and implore the forgiveness which he was, even now, too much disposed to grant, came over his grieved mind like the breath of paradise, and revived the buried feelings of a time when earth was like the echoing vestibule of an eternal temple in the skies.

While thus, amidst his mournful and perilous thoughts, he was building again the sacred altar of the heart, he did not remark a tattered and pallid figure which had frequently crossed his path and solicited his attention. Absorbed in his own visions, he depended not upon his senses for aid, but moved on mechanically, without lifting his eyes from the pavement, upon which they were fixed with unconscious earnestness, until he turned into the ill lighted and narrow street which led to his humble inn. Nor would he then have discovered distinctly any object in his path but for a sound scarcely articulate, which fell suddenly upon his ear. Alive to every indication of distress, he ejaculated, “who called so sadly?” for at the moment, he did not discover an emaciated female form shrinking into the shadow of a gateway. “One,” replied a voice hollow with famine and agony and disgrace, “one who had friends

once—who has none now ; who was loved and who dishonored that love ; who sought ease and wealth by desertion and perfidy, and has been rewarded by infamy and houseless want.” Colebrooke heard these words rapidly uttered by a faltering voice with painful attention, and replied in accents of sorrow : “ Too many such as you describe haunt the darkened wayside, and prey upon yet uncorrupted humanity ; yet not the less, from my heart I pity them. How can I relieve you ? I have not gold of my own—for Providence saw fit in its inscrutable dispensations, to deprive me of my youth’s heritage—but I think that in such a cause as this I may use a pittance of another’s portion.” As he spoke in the distinct and manly voice of happier feelings and better days, he advanced a few paces to a solitary lamp, and, opening his pocketbook, took a small note from the roll and went forward to present it to the wanderer. But he had scarcely moved three paces ere the female sprung from her hiding-place, and with a shriek that passed through Colebrooke’s heart and brain, dashed herself violently upon the street.—Amazed and distressed at this unaccountable phrenzy, he hastened to raise her, when she started from the earth with the quickness of terror and despair, threw open her shredded and squalid cloak, and, dashing the long, halfgrey and matted locks from her forehead, shrieked out, “ Walter—Walter Colebrooke ! do you know me ? Do you know the wife who wronged you—the mother that left her babes for a paramour—the wretch who plunged into vice and found despair—who fled from the temple of her God and entered the hell—the earthly hell of never dying remorse ? ”

Who shall depict the terrible agony of that moment ? There in the utter wretchedness and abandonment of poverty and crime, stood the once beautiful and beloved Elizabeth—pale, famished and hopeless—her dark eyes glaring

from their sunken sockets with an expression of mingled horror and ferocity, her bloodless lips quivering with unutterable thoughts, and every feature of her once worshipped countenance distorted by that anguish which has neither counterpart nor comforter—the one awful pang of self-condemnation. Before her stood Colebrooke—but I cannot paint his feelings or his face at such a moment as this. Had all the fears and tortures of all time been condensed into one single cup of madness; had the countless floods of affliction drowned his soul, and the fires of persecution lapt up the very life blood of his heart; he could not have exhibited a more awful statue. Fixed, as if fascinated, upon that countenance, every line of which coiled like serpents when the poison is pouring through every vein, his eyes seemed not to behold her; strained to the most intense degree of human suffering, his ears heard nothing but that one name, “Elizabeth;” wrought to agony that has no voice, his spirit sunk beneath the horror of his fate, and the earth and skies whirled around, above and below him, amidst a chaos of undistinguishable light and darkness.

“Dost thou not know me, Colebrooke? I would not again defraud you. Look not on me thus, Walter? oh, let me once more utter that blasphemed name! look not thus—curse me—pour upon me the hottest maledictions of your righteous wrath—but let me hear your voice, Walter—oh, gaze not thus on my guiltiness! O God! O God!” she continued, laying her shrivelled and cold hand upon his dropped and unresisting arm, “I have murdered his mind—I have driven him mad by my accursed presence! Walter—O my poor deserted husband! gaze not so upon the void air—tell me—speak once—are your children alive and well—*mine* I would say, but dare not—are they all living, Walter?” But Colebrooke’s eyes changed not their rivetted, awful, unconscious glare—not a muscle moved—not a

sound was heard. He stood in life with the rigidity and pallor of death, and, but for a deep, irregular and panting respiration, none would have thought that he had earthly being. "Silent! distracted by my guilt! Oh Eternal Judge of heaven and earth! take my life but restore him to himself! let *thy* just indignation rest on *me*, but spare him—spare him to the world he has not wronged—to the children he adores!"

The vain prayer had not passed her lips ere Walter, without stooping from his upright position, fell like a lifeless rock upon the pavement. The slight hold and exhausted strength of Elizabeth had but little broken the violence of his fall, and he lay passive and stunned beneath the imploring cries and tears of the outcast. At that instant a horrible thought seemed to seize upon her agonized memory, and, exerting all her force, she partially lifted him from the earth, chafed his deathlike hands and shrieked, "O Walter! Colebrooke! wake—wake—you will be murdered! O God! I did—in the madness of my despair—of my famine—I did agree with two villains to rob in the streets to-night, and I should give the signal! They will be here without it—Walter! wake—wake for the mercy of heaven! He hears me not—he will hear no more! They will plunder—they will murder him! Ho! help! help! help!" Unheard by those for whom it was intended, her cry quickly fell upon senses sharpened by famine, peril and desperation. The secreted associates of Elizabeth hurried up the lonely street with the eagerness of jaguars. "Not here—not here! remorseless villains! not here!" screamed the evil and maddened woman;—"come not near him—I have given no signal—this is not the man—away—away!"

"Softly, mistress" replied the fiercer robber, "this is as good as any—we're in for't—and he's quieter now, thanks to you, my Lady! than some would be—come, let's

see what 's inside here." "Begone, ye pitiless monsters! I will raise the town—ye shall hang for this—ho! watch! watch! watch!" The voice of Elizabeth, raised by ex-cruciated feelings, went through the street and up the still beholding skies with terrible distinctness; but the robber had seized the purse in Colebrooke's possession and a second more would have seen him in safety with his plunder, but for the convulsive grasp of his late accomplice and present foe. "Loose your hold, woman! or my dirk shall do it. Let go, I say; you have called me villain—and you led me on to this—you have called me monster—and you planned the robbery—you——." "Help! murder! robbery! help!" shrieked the gasping woman, still clinging with the tenacity of death to the body of the plunderer. The robber struggled with gigantic strength to escape; he had no thought for words; the whole force of his nature was concentrated and he dragged the guilty woman some paces ere her obstinate perseverance and his own danger turned his corrupted and fearful soul into fury. Strong men were close upon him—the very breath of the foremost could be distinctly heard; his sinewy hand was outstretched to seize the criminal. "Quick! quick!" gasped Elizabeth. The bright blade of a dagger glanced in the lamp-light; the gory form of the guilty wife rolled on the earth, and the assassin fled like the winds of the desert.

Three of the guardians of the night hasted in pursuit of the slayer; the remainder stood around the fallen. They lifted Elizabeth gently, but the blood poured in a torrent from the deep vital wound, and, with scarcely a hope that any care or science could avail, they stanchd the bubbling orifice and despatched one of their number for a surgeon in the neighborhood. "But who is this? another stabbed?" said the watchman, bending over Walter. "He has been robbed—this woman gave the alarm," replied his fellow,

"though she seems little likely to use her trumpet voice again." "But he is dead," rejoined the other, "or I have no skill in pulse or breath."

"Who speaks of death?" said Elizabeth, with the slow utterance of exhausted nature. "He was—my husband—once, and now—I have wronged—and killed him."

"*You* did not strike the plundered man?" asked the watchman quickly.

"Not with my hand—but yet upon his *heart*," answered Elizabeth in the last feeble tones that ever vibrated on those pallid and polluted lips.

The surgeon arrived to look upon the dead—for no life was left to restore. The papers found upon Colebrooke's person gave his address and that of the merchant with whom he had recently dealt, and from a full settlement with whom he was returning to his inn. Little time was spent, therefore, in investigation; the Jury's verdict satisfied all curiosity by proclaiming that Walter Colebrooke died by the bursting of a blood vessel near the heart, and his wife Elizabeth by a wound inflicted by a person or persons unknown. In a lone and unvisited corner of a solitary church-yard, beyond the confines of Boston, repose the unhappy beings, whom nature fitted to reciprocate the joys she offered, but whom evil education doomed to a joyless life and unnatural death.

The history of female frailty is always the same. From the blush of offended purity to the conscious smile over conversation dubious or profane and high-wrought descriptions of scenes in which Love is not only the winged god of sentiment but the infallible pontiff and judge of good and evil, is the first transition. From the sufferance of immorality in others to the commission of it in one's own person, there is little gradation, and thence the path lies broad and unimpeded. Guilt and splendor and a hushed conscience—

neglect, erimination, scorn, loathing, revenge and remorse follow with terrible velocity. Then come shamelessness, despair, malady, the only poverty that mocks at relief, unsolaced death—and unhonored burial. Such was the road Elizabeth trod; such, thousands tread through life!

Dalcho, returning from his Gold Coast expedition and finding his unenviable reputation less flagrant than he dreaded, became suddenly convinced that the cure of souls was a more profitable business than the death of bodies, and seriously convicted of the necessity of imposing upon the world's credulity: wherefore, ere the departure of a twelve month, he was thoroughly converted—into the disgraced and desecrated priesthood. To prevent the necessity of others asking the same favor, when denial would be dangerous, an opulent lady charitably bestowed her person and fortune upon the rescued slave-surgeon. Dalcho lived and flourished; for though he was despised and shunned by the virtuous, the world cannot distinguish between religion and hypocrisy, talent and audacity, virtue and masked vice. No one fulminated his holy vengeance with more effect against every species of offence than the accursed seducer, and hoping to become a bishop of the flock, none lifted his eyes at the reading desk with greater fervor to the heavens, none poured his menaces and implorings forth with more subduingunction. The wronged husband, the ruined father, the guilty wife and sinless children had been offered up on the Moloch shrine of this leprosied and sacrilegious priest; but, on earth the obscure and almost forgotten name of Colebrooke would not again be uttered to his soul, and the remembered *ruse*, he had played, was held to be an excellent jest or venial compliance with the feelings of nature. On the very day that Walter and Elizabeth lay cold side by side, in the sepulchre, he preached, from a carved pulpit, covered with scarlet and gold, to a fashionable congrega-

tion from the text, "Crucify, therefore, the flesh with its affections and lusts;" and liberally dispensed temporal and deathless punishment to all who had neither the subtilty to conceal vice beneath the robe of audacity, nor power to dare the world to the proof of its perpetration.

Seized ere he reached a refuge, tried, convicted and sentenced to the felon's doom—the life-in-death within forever impassable walls, the less guilty robber groaned in infamous bondage all his days. The assassin escaped from earth and agony on the gallows, amidst holy consolations, protracted prayers, psalm music, and evangelical hopes of forgiveness! So said the journals of the day; and from other examples of that magnificent charity which comforts the manacled murderer with revelations of paradise, we cannot doubt the record was true, which said that penitence, when the deed was done and could not be repeated, and sudden sorrow for sins, which could not be again enjoyed, were considered a valid foundation for the palace of eternal bliss.

Contrary to the approved and immemorial custom in such cases, the administrators of the law did actually restore to Mr. Greenwood the money taken from the robber; and returning to his ample possessions, he bound himself by an oath never again to commit his interests into the hands of any man who had feeling enough to die for unmerited dishonor, hopeless penury, and a blighted name.

Beneath the roof of their grandfather, the orphan children of sorrow found a refuge from the tempest; a home in the wilderness of being, where industry, honor and content walked calmly beneath the smile of God; and, often as his few white hairs streamed over their saddened faces, while he discoursed tearfully of his high-hearted son, long buried feelings of early love, hope and ambition—the cloud-painted anticipations of a young father—came over the bereaved

heart of the aged parent, and he would sigh and murmur in his dreams, "let not a thought soil the virgin purity of the betrothed ; let not a whisper of indiscretion assail the wedded bosom, for better is the desert without a fountain than wedlock with distrust, love without wisdom, and children without inheritance !"

NOTES

TO

THE LAST NIGHT OF POMPEII.

NOTE 1, p. 17.—*The hoar Apennines.*

I have represented Mount Vesuvius throughout the poem as a portion of the Campanian hills.

NOTE 2, p. 18.—*Thou needest not thy tephilim—
The prestiges of Augurs.*

Charms in Hebrew and pagan worship, the tricks of jugglers and imaginary protections against evil spirits and earthly calamities.

NOTE 3, p. 25.—*Cabiri.*

Mysterious demigods of Egypt and Samothrace.

NOTE 4, p. 26.—*The Ambracian waters were not deeper dyed.*

The battle of Actium, fought upon the Ambracian gulf, for ever decided the fate of Roman liberty. The glory of Octavius Cæsar rose from the blood of that fearful day, and most fearfully did it glow till barbarian retribution made Italy's charms a curse.

NOTE 5, p. 27.—*Diomede's apparitors.*

I have appropriated to the chief Ruler of Pompeii the name of its wealthiest citizen. It has been asserted, by some, that he was only a freedman, yet the Emperors seldom hesitated to confer their judicial or fiscal offices upon any who scrupled not to embrace the most oppressive means in the irresponsible administration of power. His character, therefore, as I have attempted to depict it, would synchronize with the condition of the age and the avowed crimes of Pompeii. *Apparitors* were officers of justice or injustice—bailiffs—so called from their suddenly appearing when undesired.

NOTE 6, p. 33.—*Judah's peerless monarch.*

Solomon. "Vanity of vanities! all is vanity."

NOTE 7, p. 42.—*In worship to the dread Labarum.*

The Standard of the Roman Emperors.

NOTE 8, p. 49.—*The story of his doom.*

Both the time and mode of St. Paul's martyrdom are problematical. The opinion is generally received that he died during the persecution of Nero, about ten years before the period of my story; but as chronologists differ and biographers cannot agree, I have assumed the right to narrate his death, in the person of Pansa, as in the text.

NOTE 9, p. 54.—*The Accursed field.*

The Campus Sceleratus, where vestal virgins were buried alive when they followed the example of Rhœa Sylvia. The Tarpeian Rock was not far removed from such appropriate neighborhood.

NOTE 10, p. 54.—*The aruspices in purple trabæ walked.*

The prognosticators of Rome were allowed extraordinary honors; and their trabæ or robes of office nearly resembled those of the Emperors. Every superstition exalts its expositors; and the Roman priests well knew the power which fear and ignorance conferred upon them, and abhorred in the same degree that they dreaded the illumination of Christianity. The fasces, the trabæ, pretextæ, and curule chair were introduced by Tarquin Priscus from conquered Tuscany.

NOTE 11, p. 56.—*The Gracchi from the Aventine dragged forth.*

For attempting by the enactment of the Agrarian Law, to restrain the exorbitant power of the patricians, Tiberius Gracchus was assassinated in the Capitol by Scipio Nasica; Caius Gracchus and Fulvius Flaccus were killed by Opimius, the consul; Saturninus the tribune was murdered by a mob of Conscript Fathers; and Livius Drusus, on the same account, was slain in his own house. All in Rome, who could not trace their descent from the highwayman Romulus or some one of his least merciful banditti, were esteemed no better than vassals. The Romans never understood either justice, mercy, or freedom; their dominion was acquired by the sword without remorse, and it perished by the sword without regret.

NOTE 12, p. 59.—*The isles shall wait, Jehovah! for thy law.*

I have made the dying ejaculations of St. Paul to consist mostly of portions of his own powerful writings. Nothing more beautiful or splendid can be found in any compositions—more vivid with the heart's best emotions and the mind's most lofty concep-

tions—than the remonstrances and arguments of the great Apostle, who devoted himself to the propagation of that religion he had once assailed, with an energy and enthusiasm and utter oblivion of self, which should find more imitators among the curates of men's souls.

NOTE 13, p. 63.—*Shalt quaff the massic or the tears of Christ.*

The wine of Mount Vesuvius is profanely called *Lacrymæ Christi*.

NOTE 14, p. 65.—*The Mamertine abysses.*

Dungeons even more horrible than those of Venitian and Austrian tyranny, dug immediately beneath the elevated seat of the Prætor, in the hall of judgment; and so called from the Roman consul Mamertinus, who planned their construction, and who should have been, like Phalaris and the inventor of the guillotine, the first to test the merit of his philanthropic ingenuity.

NOTE 15, p. 70.—*For they were stricken from the roll of men
And banished from humanity.*

Probably among no people, not even the mercenary Africans themselves, who are always more ready to sell than the Christian trafficker is to buy, was the condition of slaves so utterly hopeless and irreclaimable as in the republics of Greece and Rome. Their vivid jealousy of personal privileges peculiarly fitted them to tyrannize over every people not incorporated within their chartered dominions. Nothing is so cruel as boasting philanthropy; nothing, so unjust as a dominant hierarchy; nothing, so capricious and despotic as an unrestrained democracy.

NOTE 16, p. 71.— - - - - gazed,
Bewildered on the amphoræ—

The priests of Pompeii were no believers in a preshadowed Mahommedan sobriety or the Genevan doctrine of total abstinence; but, rather, devout apostles of good fellowship, *bonhomie* and *bienseance*, whose credenda have lacked no devotees among the administrators of a very different religion. Their amphoræ or wine casks were always amply supplied by votaries who did not doubt that their spiritual guides possessed the same prerogatives in Tartarus which less remote exclusives in sanctity assume to exercise in Hades. The skeletons of many priests, on the excavation of Pompeii, were found amidst the relics of their revel. Can we suppose that even the ministers of a degraded superstition and a most lascivious mythology could trust in the protection of Jove or Osiris? or must we rather conclude that criminal appe-

tite excluded natural fear and that they reasoned, like Pompey on his last journey—"It is necessary that we should be gluttons and revellers, but it is not necessary that we should live."?

NOTE 17, p. 75.— - - - - *Untrimmed lamps
Sculptured with shapes of ribaldry to lure.*

The sensualities of Pompeii were not restricted by any deference to decorum even in external dissembling; but the passions, which burned in their bosoms, were too graphically represented upon their customary utensils. The secret deposits of the Museum Borbonico at Naples will illustrate this to any who are incredulous of the noisome excess to which sin may be extended.

NOTE 18, p. 77.—*The Sybarite from Salmacis arose.*

Even in an age proverbial for its effeminacy and vice, the Sybarites were quoted as the acme of examples; and the waters of Salmacis, by some mysterious properties, were considered capable of restoring the frame, exhausted by profligacy, to its original vigor.

No one who had broken an oath made by the Styx (which not even the gods dared to infringe) could be permitted to drink of Lethe or oblivion of the evils and sufferings which he had been doomed to bear for his crimes.

NOTE 19, p. 78.— - - - - *Now towered the gonfulon
Of Isis, glowing with devices shame
Shrunk to behold, the shapes of earth's worst sins.*

The pamyli and phallephoria. The character of the Romans under the emperors renders it unnecessary for me to create any reluctance on their part to gaze upon objects, in public processions, which in other communities, would have never been imagined. Greece took her religion from Egypt—Rome her's from Greece—and both had public temples dedicated to the Aspasias, Galateas and Campaspes of the age. The pastophori or priests of Isis, therefore, felt themselves much at home in Pompeii.

NOTE 20, p. 79.—*The war god with the Ancilia.*

The sacred shields of Rome—borne in the processions of Mars, who of all the monstrous idols was the most worshipped because the least merciful. Is it not a singular anomaly of the human mind that in every creed the god of *vengeance* has always been the most opulent and popular? "By what casuistry can infinite punishments be reconciled with finite offence? or why should men be instructed to fear an endlessness of torment for sins ephemeral as their breath?"

NOTE 21, p. 30.—*And we must drag them to the altar.*

Nothing could be more ominous of evil than any resistance or even reluctancy on the part of the victims to be sacrificed. That the offering might be auspicious it was necessary that the animal should seem to rejoice in its sacred death.

NOTE 22, p. 86.—*Obelia.*

A peculiar sort of sacrificial cakes.—

It was held unholy to offer up any maimed or imperfect creature, and herein the Judean ecclesiastical enactments agreed with those of the Greeks and Romans. All their animal sacrifices were “chosen for beauty and young quickening life.”

Any blemish inflicted by the Huntress or Pythias, by Sun or Moon namely, was deemed a particular offence to the deity.

NOTE 23, p. 94.—*And each Promethean divination brought.*

See Potter's *Antiquities*, Von Hammer &c. for the various superstitious observances of the Greeks and Romans. In the scene of the sacrifice I have introduced evil omens—such as the Romans feared in their height of power—throughout the ceremonial.

NOTE 24, p. 95.—*Bore Pompeii's loveliest virgin.*

Human sacrifices were not uncommon during the earlier periods of the Greek and Roman history; and I cast no additional discredit upon the ancient character of heathenism by representing the disappointed consulters of the gods putting in action their cannibal ferocities. Iphigenia and Jephtha's daughter illustrate Grecian mythology and Jewish vows.

NOTE 25, p. 96.—*When has the bigot, whatsoe'er his crown.—*

I appeal to all history, civil, sacred, ecclesiastical and profane. Persecution is not exclusive; give preponderance to any sect or faction and it will tyrannize; the faggot would be lighted, the dungeon filled, the deathaxe red. The civil power would collude with the church as it has always done, when the latter claimed the prerogatives of heaven to exempt it from human accountability—because superstitious ignorance fears more the anathemas of a priesthood than the agonies and blood of a thousand victims. Representations of eternal punishments due to those who indulge humanity, by sparing the proscribed, the heretics, namely—have influenced mankind far more than the view of nations banished and provinces depopulated by the relentless malignity of some Torquemada of paynimrie or Christendom. Factions and sects, in politics and religion, never yet won any thing but ruin and disgrace, yet they are perpetuated and multiplied as the world wears to waste!

NOTE 26, p. 96.—*O'er the lava walks.*

The streets of Pompeii were paved with blocks of lava; and the audacious apathy, which they manifested amidst the threatenings of Vesuvius, may be ascribed to their familiarity with earthquakes and volcanoes. The wretched inhabitants of Portici, Torre del Greco and other exposed villages are, at this day, as unapprehensive of the peril that has overhung them since their birth, as were the Pompeiians at their death-hour. Cities buried in lava or ashes, may lie beneath even Herculaneum and Pompeii.

NOTE 27, p. 97.—*The music of the sistrum.*

A stringed instrument peculiar to the mysterious rites of Isis, which, like most other mysteries, concealed the most nefarious practices.

NOTE 28, p. 101.—*Holy Diana! hath thine Iris come.*

The rainbow, in every mythology, has been beautifully personified. Iris, its goddess, was the messenger of the ancient deities; and though employed by jealous Juno to create "green eyed monsters," she was more happily occupied, in general, in separating virtuous souls from feeble frames and escorting them to Elysium. No one is ignorant of the Scandinavian *bifrost*, and the romantic tales of the Eddas.

NOTE 29, p. 104.—*Breathes not the soul of mystery in this?*

The whole art of uttering oracles consisted in choosing terms capable of any construction. The desires of the consulter determined the meaning; and neither Delphi nor Dodona could commit its credit by the failure of a prophecy which, it might allege, was never properly understood. No one can have forgotten the celebrated response (which illustrates the sophistries and follies of the ancients) "Aio te, Æacide, Romanos vincere posse."

The maiden now consents to give an Isean response, prefiguring the ruin impending, from which all who escape, must fly by sea, that the absence of the priest may afford her an opportunity to shun his embraces.

NOTE 30, p. 105.—*The mocker Momus has his jest.*

Momus, the Jester of the gods, when Jupiter presented the man whom he had created to his inspection, and asked him how, characteristically, he could find fault with such workmanship, replied with a sneer that the defect was both obvious and incurable—that one so wise as the king of gods and men should have placed a mirror over his heart that all might discern evil purposes in

their first conception. The priest, by filling with his person the aperture of the image, pleasantly deems himself the mirror that reveals and directs the minds of men.

NOTE 31, p. 122.— - - *The wanton canvass lived
With Mycon's impure thought.*

All the ancient sculptors and painters, inimitable as they were in the execution of their conceptions, faithfully followed, perhaps led the blush-disowning taste of the times; and every banquet-hall and chamber exhibited indubitable testimonials of their uses.—Mycon, Xeuxis and Parrhasius, it is hardly necessary to say, were gifted and celebrated artists.

NOTE 32, p. 123.—*Or I may brand the theta on thy brow.*

The Greek letter (theta) was burned upon the foreheads of slaves as an indelible sign of proprietorship; hence they were called *literati*—a term *strictly* applicable to some less ancient and better conditioned persons than the captive barbarians of buried times.

NOTE 33, p. 123.—*The tintinnaculus may shame thy clink!*

The Prætor may, perhaps, be allowed a pun. Tintinnaculus may mean a public whipper—an inflicter of the bastinado—and a jingling rhymers; lashes and verses both may be melodious.

NOTE 34, p. 127.—*Hath the caduceus met the eye of day.*

The wand of Mercury was the sign of peace; the caduceus was, therefore, seldom out of the hand of the lord of larceny.

NOTE 35, p. 128.—*The tyrant raised his hundred banquet halls,
Tritoli's stews and Baiæ's palaces.*

The *Cento Camarelle* of Nero and *Piscina Mirabile* (wonderful fishpond) of Lucullus, even in ruins, are objects of amazement to less abominable despots of modern times. Baiæ was the most voluptuous of all the voluptuous resorts of the Romans, and the baths of Tritoli were necessary to restore the patricians after Falernian excesses. Here Lucullus fed his fish on human flesh—here Cicero perished—by the permission of his friend Octavius.

NOTE 36, p. 132.—*A darker doom than his, &c.*

Marius. Sylla died at Puteoli, as Herod afterwards perished, of a most loathsome disease and in the midst of debaucheries.

NOTE 38, p. 134.—*I see a hoary head o'ercrowned.*

The Pope—whose tiara was the very meteor of ruin.

NOTE 39, p. 134.—*Though thou with Epaphroditus shalt live,
Empedocles and Barcochab in fame.*

Epaphroditus, to immortalize himself, set fire to the temple of Ephesian Diana on the night Macedonian Alexander was born; Empedocles, to persuade men he was a god, threw himself into Mount Ætna, but the volcano cast out his slipper and betrayed him; Barcochab, who called himself the Son of a Star, but whom his countrymen named the Son of a Lie, was one of the innumerable false prophets of that strange people—the Jews.

NOTE 40, p. 135.—*The Lectisternian banquet.*

The funeral festival—the last of earthly indulgencies.

NOTE 41, p. 139.—*The Attic Sage.*

Socrates. His execution was delayed on the occurrence of a sacred festival—the annual voyage to the Immortal Isle, where none were permitted to be born or to die. Superstition sported with the tortures of injustice and cruelty.

NOTE 42, p. 145.—*Gaze from the podium.*

What is now the orchestra—then, the envied place of power and privilege.

NOTE 43, p. 146.—*Mingle the fiats of philosophy.*

However the sages of antiquity condemned the cruel sports of their countrymen, they seldom hesitated to witness and thereby sanction the atrocities which were perpetrated in every amphitheatre. Like the bullfights of modern Spain, the gladiatorial contests (the death-struggle of the agonistes and athlete) always attracted the presence and enjoyment of the most learned, opulent and famed of the Romans.

NOTE 44, p. 147.—*Salute the ruthless Genius of the Games.*

Morituri te salutant (the dead salute thee) were the melancholy words of prophecy uttered by all condemned to fight in the arena.

NOTE 45, p. 149.—*Mutters Domitian and Locasta's cup.*

Titus is supposed to have been poisoned by his brother Domitian—who was himself finally assassinated. Locasta was the female fiend of Colchian drugs.

NOTE 46, p. 150.—*Andraste.*

The British goddess of retribution.

NOTE 47, p. 151.—*The Praesul.*

The vicar general of Roman mythology.

NOTE 48, p. 153.—*Like the great Pisan.*

Galileo. See Brewster's Life of that great and weak man.

NOTE 49, p. 163.—*And low the lion cowered.*

A scene somewhat like this is depicted in "*The Vestal*," a little work published two or three years ago, and written by Dr. Gray of Boston. But while I am happy to acknowledge both the pleasure and benefit I have derived from that elegant story, I must be allowed to say that the causes of the lion's submission are unlike. He cowers at the feet of the aged Christian in that work, because he sees an old master; here, he is made to submit on the well-known principle familiar to naturalists, that during any great convulsion of nature, the most savage animals forget their common animosities, and that the lion will not attack a man who steadily fixes his eyes upon him.—Having formed the plan of the whole poem and finished a considerable portion of it previous to my first perusal of the "*Tale of Pompeii*," I was unwilling to forego the scene I had conceived previous to even the knowledge of the publication of Dr. Gray; and, therefore, have ventured to tread upon ground which has been trod by Milman and Croly.

NOTE 50, p. 174.—*The voice of age.*

That is, of the aged Christian with whom Mariamne had taken refuge on her escape from the temple of Venus.

NOTE 51, p. 174.—*Tergeste.*

Trieste.

NOTE 52, p. 179.—*The hoar devotee of earth's diadems.*

The allusion throughout is to the Head of what was, for a long time, the Catholic Church; and even the very strictest disciple of papal supremacy must lament the desecration of almost unlimited power in the hands of many who better understood the law of might, the pageantries of the tournament, the forms of the duello, the shock of war and the dominion of the castle, than the edicts and ceremonies and devotions of the pontificate. The "*Rock amid the ruins*" alludes to Peter, the reputed founder of the bishopric of Rome—his Greek name means a rock.

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